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Buffalo Bill Weekly

DEVOTED TO
FAR WEST LIFE

BUFFALO BILL'S PUEBLO FOES



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NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY

Devoted To



Far West Life

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No. 276.

NEW YORK, December 22, 1917

Price Six Cents.

BUFFALO BILL'S PUEBLO FOES;

OR,

PAWNEE BILL AT THE INDIAN FIESTA.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

THE BARON AND THE INDIAN THIEF.

If the baron had known that the Pueblos were engaged in "killing the devil," as a preliminary to the hilarities of the fiesta, it is probable that he would have changed his mind regarding his costume. Still, he might not have done so, for a tang of danger mixed with his spice of adventure was a thing he dearly loved.

He had slipped into the piñon grove with his mule, Toofer, sure that he had not been seen. The big saddle roll had been placed on the ground, and, while the baron inspected its contents, the mule nosed about for the few spears of grass the place afforded.

The baron's limited experience had made him expect a masquerade.

There had been a fiesta of that kind in Phoenix, a good while before, where he had thrown himself about regardless, dressed as Captain Kidd, with long sword and jack boots, and had enjoyed the time of his life. And there had been others equally hilarious.

So when the baron heard of this Pueblo fiesta, and that Buffalo Bill was to be there, his preparations fitted his ideas of the occasion.

The costume the baron had brought from Santa Fe was that of a red devil, horns, cloven hoof, spiked tail, and all; and when he had squeezed into it, stretching the elastic cloth to fit his pippin-shaped body, he admired his get-up in a small looking-glass which he set up in the crotch of a tree before him.

"Himmel!" he said. "Idt iss enough to skeer der shickens."

He slipped the headpiece on and looked; then slipped it off and looked.

"Whichefer I am, Schnitzenhauser or der tuyful, I am sure a sighdts. Oof I shouldt meedt meinselluf in der draill, I vouldt be running yedt. Nopoty knows me at der Inchun pueblo, unt I gan haf some funniness all py my lonesomeness. Efen Cody—"

His mule was wandering to the edge of the grove. Turn-

ing about, he was about to call it when he saw the outline of a dodging Indian.

"Yiminy!" The baron rocked back and dropped behind a convenient tree trunk. "Vot iss der meanness oof him?"

A moment later he saw the Indian again. The red rascal had approached the mule, apparently with the intention of seizing the bridle and making off with the animal.

Instead of rushing forth on discovering this intention, the baron began to shake with laughter, forgetting at the moment the terrifying costume that clothed him.

"Oof he dries dot games, Toofer vill keek him py der mittle oof der nexdt veek. Yaw, ve shall seen some fun."

True enough, when the redskin put out his hand to seize the bridle, Toofer shifted end with himself and sent out a lightning kick.

But it did not reach, and the Indian was not discovered. He evidently did not know that the owner of the mule lay in hiding near by; at any rate, his actions led to that conclusion on the part of the baron. So, cutting a short circuit, he came at the mule again.

The mule edged away. But his ears were laid back and he rolled his eyes round at the advancing Indian. The watching German chuckled and pounded himself joyously on the breast.

"Toofer iss oop to sniff," he whispered. "Pooty soon he vill gidt der retskin-py der slack oof himsellef unt shake him like a rats. Yaw, I haf seen him do idt."

Toofer continued to edge along, and the redskin continued to follow with hand stretched out to catch hold of the bridle.

Sharp as were the eyes of the baron, he did not observe that this was an Indian with whom, not long before, he had come into intimate contact, but thought him a Pueblo from a near-by village, as he was dressed like one.

Whirling suddenly, Toofer rushed the troublesome rascal, with teeth showing and long ears flattened wickedly.

But the agile fellow danced so quickly aside that the mule passed him futilely. The next instant the redskin had hold of the stirrup with one hand and was reaching for the bridle rein with the other.

Toofer wheeled again; but the Indian, keeping close to him, merely pivoted round, and the next moment he was on Toofer's back.

It was so surprising an exhibition of skill in that line that it alarmed the baron, particularly when the Indian began to jerk at the reins and hammer the mule's sides with his heels.

"Ach! He iss going to rite Toofer away! Donderunt-blitzen!"

The baron popped out from behind the concealing tree.

His startling intrusion on the scene was most untimely. Toofer was not by any means subjugated, and might have unseated the Indian but for the baron's inopportune appearance.

Not recognizing the red devil that appeared and began to yell at him, the mule became even more frightened than the Indian on his back. He whirled, jumped for the opening he saw ahead of him, and went out of the grove at top speed.

Ducking low, the Indian avoided the piñon boughs which swung back to tear him out of the saddle, while clinging to the reins and the saddle horn.

A minute later, mule and rider had cleared the piñons and were going at furious speed straight for the Indian pueblo, dead ahead; and behind them, running as fast as his pipestem legs could carry him, rushed the baron, a red devil, howling German anathemas and dragging a red devil's tail whose spike tore up the sand like the fluke of an anchor.

CHAPTER II.

VELVET FOSTER.

The big man who sat half naked in a little upper room of the adobe pueblo and worked to get the irritating spines out of his cactus-stung cuticle was not put into a more pleasant temper by the antics of the Indians who were "killing the devil."

"The fools!" he snarled.

The redskins drove by the wall below him, yelling and howling. Finding a corner in which the devil had lodged, they charged it, shooting gunpowder into the wall until it was black.

Routing the devil out of that corner, they drove him madly into another and charged him again, with guns and revolvers popping like fusillading firecrackers.

The big man, digging at his burning skin, wondered what they really thought about it. The "devil" they chased and charged was invisible. Did they really think that a devil haunted the pueblo and had to be scared out of it in that way before the fiesta ceremonies and enjoyments could begin? Or were they merely following up an old custom?

The big man did not know; truth to tell, he did not much care. But he knew they made an infernal din.

The light was failing in the little room; it faced east, and night was approaching. Still he strained his eyes and kneaded with his fingers. There were red welts on his body ridged like ropes. They showed where cactus whips had cut into his naked flesh and left ribbons of spines that had festered in the flesh.

"The devils who did this haven't anything to learn from any Pueblo devil," he grunted. "But I suppose I ought to be thankful that they didn't kill me. I don't blame the Navahos half as much as I do Bill Cody; he could have got me out of their hands, and he wouldn't."

The man with the cactus-stung hide was Velvet Foster. Several years before, when forced to flee from the minions of the law, he had sought out this lonely pueblo, claiming to be a scientist much interested in Pueblo customs. He had shown the Pueblos a book that had in it pictures of Pueblos and Pueblo pottery, and had told them that he was the writer of the book; he claimed that the Pueblos pictured in the book were Zunis, of whom they had heard, and that he had come to study this Pueblo and would write another book and put them in it.

Thereupon they had given him shelter, and he had remained a long time, living on their bounty, while government officers hunted for him in vain.

Fleeing recently from the Navahos who had lashed him with cacti, he had again sought the shelter of the people who had been friendly to him before. He had no book

to exhibit, but he had explanations for its nonappearance, and once more they had given him shelter.

His condition he accounted for by declaring that in a fight with wild animals he had been hurled into a cacti of so terrible a character that he had barely escaped with his life. The Pueblo Indians had furnished him ointments, which he had applied, and had helped to dig cactus spines out of his body. But all had not come out, and he was still at it; it was a tedious and painful work.

Knowing that the fiesta was to begin that night and continue for two or three days, Foster meant to keep out of sight throughout the whole of it, secluded in his little room. These fiestas always drew white people through curiosity. Sometimes newspaper correspondents appeared, who wrote marvelous letters to Eastern journals of the things they saw and heard. Foster did not want to be seen by any of them.

So he had told the friendly Pueblos that his stay there was not to be mentioned. Many white men were jealous of him, he said, and would steal the pictures he was making and the material he was gathering; hence he preferred to keep out of their sight.

The Pueblos did not remember this, nor him, fifteen minutes afterward; their minds being engrossed in the devil hunt that was taking place and in the preparations that were going on.

For a month the runners had been training; for twice that time the Indians who were to take part in the immemorial secret rites of the estufa had been drilling for their parts. They had not time to think of the white man who was writing a book, and only their ingrained hospitality kept them from forgetting to set food before him.

Foster was safe, so far as the Pueblos were concerned.

Fuming over the pain, and grumbling about the noise made by the devil hunters, while looking through the small, deep window that gave him an outlet on the world, Foster beheld a sight that made him ignore the sting of his hurts and forget even the howling of the excited redskins.

An Indian, dressed like a Pueblo, but whom he recognized as Feather Foot, long his faithful follower, was riding at wild speed toward the pueblo from the nearest grove of piñons, and was being pursued by as singular a creature as ever trod the stage or came out of the pages of a storybook.

He was seeing the flight of the Indian on the back of Toofer and the baron's mad pursuit in his red-devil costume.

The sight brought Foster to the deep window with a jump.

The sinking sun, tipping the edge of the distant hills, still cast light on the pueblo and on the piñon grove and the figures that had appeared out of it—a red light which gave a weird effect to the whole scene.

The yells of the baron, reaching to the pueblo, caught the attention of the Indians who were so recklessly burning gunpowder against the walls. They had been scaring away the invisible devil; now here came one who was not only visible, but was chasing a Pueblo Indian.

For a minute, though they trembled, they stood their ground. One of them, in his excitement, banged away with his musket at the mule; but he did no harm, as the musket was loaded only with gunpowder. Then they fled, disappearing into the pueblo like rats into holes.

Velvet Foster had by this time crawled through the tube-like space which, cut through the thick wall, served as his window. This was necessary if he saw what followed; for the mule and rider and the red devil that pursued were coming close up to the wall.

Poking out his head, he saw that the rider of the mule was guiding it toward the lower end of the big, thick-walled building, where a portion of the wall had been broken down and never repaired, and an opening invited.

The words of the pursuer coming to him, he turned to listen.

"Sdop!" the baron was bellowing, though he was nearly breathless. "You, Toofer, why tond't you sdop idt? Tond't you can see dot I am coming!"

"Schnitzenhauser!" gulped Foster. "In the name of wonder, what does that mean—Cody's Dutchman dressed like that? Cody must be round here himself."

Sweat broke out on his face.

The red devil, following the mule, turned also toward the broken place in the wall.

Satisfied that the rider of the mule was Feather Foot and the pursuer none other than Baron von Schnitzenhauser, Foster slid back through the hole into his little room, which he abandoned at once and began to descend through the darkness a set of mud-built steps.

These led to a rude ladder, down which he crept with all haste. Another ladder followed before the ground floor of the pueblo was gained.

On his way down Foster saw no Indians; frightened half out of their wits by the red devil they had seen sprinting after the man on the mule, they had scattered and sought hiding places.

Getting out of the building hastily, Foster still did not rush along blindly, knowing that the man in the devil costume was one of Buffalo Bill's men, whom he had every reason to fear.

But he gained the vicinity of the broken wall just after the mule and its rider shot through it and passed on inside. With a leap he reached the shadows by the wall, and when the baron came through he dealt the German a blow that sent him reeling.

The frightened Indian had slid down when the mule stopped; but the mule was still in action in another line, kicking and jumping, and Feather Foot was getting out of the way with a celerity that did credit to his nimble legs.

Toofer, in the end, though he had served the baron a scaly trick, did him a good turn, for he dashed at Foster, his teeth clicking in anger, and fairly ran him down, flinging kicks at him; the mule passed on, and, seeing no more worlds to conquer, he stopped by the farther wall and stood there breathing like a steam engine and emitting excited brays of the "hee-haw" order.

Having escaped the heels of the mule, Foster turned to look for the baron, whom he expected to find on the ground, for he had swung a fearful blow and the baron had caught it.

The baron was not there. But a hole just ahead, which resembled the opening of a well, seemed to indicate that he had gone down into it.

Foster would have gone down after the baron but for two reasons.

The first was that some Pueblos had appeared, to whom he was willing to turn over the task, in the belief that it would go hard with the baron when he fell into their hands.

His second reason was that he did not want the baron to recognize him; and up to that time he was sure the baron had not done so.

A further reason might be found in the approach of Feather Foot, who, making a dash at the opening in the wall by which he had entered, would have gone out now if Foster had not caught him and flung him back.

"You fool!" said Foster.

Feather Foot, shaking like a leaf, did not recognize Foster, who was but half dressed and in a not very recognizable condition, and would have broken away if Foster's grip had not been good.

"You crazy idiot!" Foster snarled, whirling him round and pointing to an opening. "Hustle in there, and then give an account of yourself!"

The opening was the one by which Foster had emerged.

When he had made Feather Foot scramble ahead of him up the ladders and the mud steps, until the little room under the flat roof was gained, Foster announced to Feather Foot who he was.

But the young Indian was in no condition to talk. He had been scared half to death by the terrible form that had risen out of the midst of the trees and chased him with such howls.

Finally he stopped the chattering of his teeth. In the fading light he surveyed Foster in amazement, understanding at last that he was his old master whom he had hoped to rejoin.

"I don't wonder," said Foster, biting off the words bitterly; "I look like I had been through fire, and I have—cactus fire. But I'm still alive. And I'm glad you're here, for you can help get these spines out of my hide."

Then he sneered.

"Who did you think it was you was running from?"

"Me not know," chattered the Indian, looking round with a jerk as if he expected the terrible apparition to show itself again.

"Mebbyso um spirit," he confessed, when he had again gathered his courage.

"How did it happen? How did you come to be on that mule?"

"Find um in piñon," said Feather Foot. "When me take um, red devil jump out and run after."

"And you didn't know him?"

Feather Foot's answer was the equivalent of the declaration that he was not on familiar terms with devils of any kind.

"That was Cody's Dutchman," said Foster.

Feather Foot sat up straighter. He was not sure that was so—did not see how it could be so—yet it made him feel better.

"You seen Cody's Dutchman?"

"Ai. Look much heap different."

"That was him. You wouldn't have run so if you had known it? You didn't see Buffalo Bill anywhere?"

"No see Buff'lo Bill."

"Nor any of his other friends?"

"No see um."

"They'll be round here to witness the fiesta; the fact that the baron is here shows it. So I've got to keep out of sight, and you must do the same. You can stay here with me, and I can throw a blanket over you when any of the Pueblos come round."

He looked hard at the crouching Indian.

"You came here to find me? What made you think I was here?"

"You 'member them Navaho?" said Feather Foot.

"I'm not likely to forget 'em," said Foster. "They gave me the dance of the cactus thongs, and you see the fix it left me in after Cody abandoned me there. But he took you away with him."

"When him come by Santa Fe, let Feather Foot go. Then me go back and look round Navaho village. No can find you. Bimeby me find you' trail."

"And you followed it until it brought you here? How long have you been hanging round this place?"

"Git here one sleep ago," said Feather Foot.

"What you been doing since?"

"Eat um piñon nut. Hunt round. Think mebbysso can pick up trail again in 'nother place. But no can do. Mucho 'fraid to come into village; mebbysso like Navaho village. Bimeby think must go hunt some 'nother place. Mule come in piñons where Feather Foot make um sleepy eye; Feather Foot wake up an' see um. Think like to git mule, ride away. Then red devil he come chase um."

Having got this information, Velvet Foster sat thinking it over. He had forgotten the irritation of the cactus spines.

"The coming of that Dutchman may not prove that Buffalo Bill is here looking for me," he concluded; "but if he learns that I am here he will not stop until he lands me or I kill him. Perhaps he thinks that I didn't live through the Navaho dance of the cactus thongs; it finishes most men who go through it."

He turned to the silent Indian.

"You are a faithful fellow, Feather Foot; no white man would have stuck to me as you have. I'll not forget it. You don't know anything about these Pueblos, but I think I can say that they will be all right to us as long as they treat us right. Still, I think you had better stay in here out of the way. They are getting ready for one of their big times, and they may not like to have an Indian of another tribe looking in on their sacred ceremonies."

He went to the cot in the corner and tore off a blanket.

"If any one comes to the door while I'm out, slip under the cot and wrap this blanket round you. Where did you get those Pueblo clothes?"

"Steal um last night," confessed Feather Foot.

"Struck a Pueblo clothesline and lifted them. That shows you intended to get in here by some hook or crook and make a search for me, after you failed to find my trail leading away. I suppose your own clothing you hid out somewhere?"

"Ai. Make um cache," said Feather Foot.

"I guess it's a good thing you had on those clothes; they make you look like a Pueblo, and perhaps the Pueblos will think that one of their own men was on the mule. We'll hope so."

He threw down the blanket and turned to leave the room.

"Keep quiet while I'm gone," he ordered; "I'll be back in a few minutes."

"You got um eat?" said Feather Foot, who was famished.

Foster took some bread from a niche in the wall.

"This is all I have now. But if the Pueblos don't forget me while their excitement is on I'll have more this evening."

Feather Foot attacked the dry bread ravenously.

Foster brought out a decorated olla half full of water and set it before Feather Foot. Then he left him.

When he reached the spot by the broken wall through which the mule had entered, he saw that the hole inside the wall into which the baron had fallen was surrounded by a group of excited Pueblos.

It had been his intention to explore that hole and ascertain what had happened to the baron, but the Indians held him back.

"Devil go in there," they said. "You hear um?"

Foster bent over the hole and listened.

The sounds he heard were like those made by a pickax, but they were dull and apparently far off.

"The devil who went in there didn't have a pick," he said to the Indians.

They told him as well as they could that the devil in the hole was striking the rocks with the spike they had seen at the end of his tail.

"That is nonsense," said Foster. "If you'll let me go down I'll find out just what he is doing."

They refused to let him go down. The devil had appeared before them in visible form—the first time they had ever seen him; but they knew now that he had been frightened by the shooting and was trying to escape by digging through the rocks. They wanted him to get out, and they did not intend that his efforts in that line should be interfered with by Foster.

"What is down in the hole?" Foster asked.

"The devil is in the hole."

"But what else?" Foster persisted.

It was just a hole, they explained, though once it had been a well. There was now no water in it. If there had been, the devil would not have gone into it, for it was known that he hated water.

When again Foster tried to go down they showed such anger that he had to abandon his intention.

In no pleasant frame of mind, he returned to the little upper room in which he had left Feather Foot.

CHAPTER III.

THE BARON AND THE DESPERADOES.

When Baron von Schnitzenhauser took his tumble into the old well his lucky star was still in the ascendant; otherwise, it would seem that the fall must have killed him. The well widened out from the top, and he did not hit the sides, but he did strike the bottom rather heavily and was rendered insensible.

When he knew again that he was in the land of the living, his ideas were so muddled and hazy that he recalled nothing of the immediate past, but thought that he had been asleep or was still asleep and dreaming.

All about him was darkness. But there was a small hole overhead, which would have let in light, he thought, if queer faces had not continually appeared there and shut it out.

"I am inkinscious," he muttered, lying on his back and staring at the faces that looked down at him, though he was not seen; "I am inkinscious, unt I t'ink me I am hafing sweet treams. Dose faces dot I see I do nodd seen, unt dose voices dot I hear whispering I am nodd hearing. When I vake me oop I vill know how idt iss unt where I am unt odder t'ings. Yoost now——"

He turned himself with difficulty on hearing the sound of a pick.

"Dot iss anodder kveerness," he thought. "Meppysso I am deadt unt somepody iss making a grafeyardt vor me already. Idt iss close py my headt."

The sound of the pick seemed so near that he hitched toward it, and his outstretched hands touched a stone wall.

"Somepody on der oudtsite oof dhis blace iss drying to gidt in," he muttered. "Aber he aind't grazzy he iss been a fools; vor vhy shouldt eenypoty vandt to gidt in here? I am mixed oop. Oof Cody——"

That gave a new turn to his hazy thoughts.

"I vos to meedt Cody. Dhere vos to be a masquerate, unt—— Yaw, now idt iss coming pack py me! I am standing under idt now. I am a redt tuyful, unt I am going to der Inchun masquerate pall py der bueplo. Now idt iss gedtting me. I am come to der grove oof der biñons, unt I t'ink me I vill pudt on der masquerate. Unt vhen I am doing so an Inchun steals dot Toofer moeel."

"Vhen I run afdher him I come py der hole in der bueplo vall, unt——ach, I musdt pe treaming, for dhen I see dot Vosder vot iss deadt, der man vot I haf heardt der Navahos kilt. Unt he iss here, budt idt aind't him; idt iss der sbirit oof him, vot loogks der same. Vhich broves dot I am deadt, too; tond't idt? I am gifing idt oop."

He stopped his muddled cogitations and listened again to the sound of the pickax so close by his ear.

"All der dimes idt iss coming closer," he muttered.

Lifting himself on his elbow, he stared at the wall.

Thump! thump! thump!

"A bickax, sure enough," he said. "I vonder vot iss der meanness?"

After a few more strokes, the point of the pickax broke through the wall, and the gleam of a lantern came through. The baron also heard a low grumble of voices.

"I am treaming, sweetly treaming," he muttered; "I am soundt asleeb in my liddle pedt unt hearing t'ings vot iss nodd."

A stone, torn out by the pick, tumbled down and touched his hand. Then another came down, with a small cloud of dust that got into his nostrils and irritated them. With difficulty the baron choked back a sneeze.

"Eenyhow, idt iss a funny pitzness, I pedt you!" he declared. "I vonder vot iss der meanness oof der tream vot I am treaming?"

The light of the lantern brightened in the well as the hole grew larger. The faces and the voices at the top of the well were no longer to be seen and heard. The baron concluded rightly that the gleam of the lantern had frightened them away.

Some more stones clattered down, and the hole, large enough now, admitted the body of a man.

The man who crawled in through the hole carried the lantern, and on his face he wore a mask.

"Der tream idt iss gidt kveerer unt kveerer; pooty soon——"

"Hello!" a voice interrupted, coming from behind the mask.

It was a subdued voice, and it seemed not to be directed to the baron, but to some one in the hole.

"Crawl through here, you fellers, an' see what ye make o' this," it whispered.

The baron had closed his eyes and remained still through an instinct of caution. Perhaps, he thought, he was not dreaming and he saw a real live masked man. It might mean danger to himself or not; but caution became him. He knew he was in no condition to put up a fight.

Two other men came scrambling into the old well through the hole that had been cut in the wall.

"Meppysso idt iss some more oof der masqueraters," thought the baron; but he did not open his eyes.

Varied exclamations, all whispered, sounded, and he knew the men were stooping over him; he felt the light of the lantern touch his eyelids.

"The Old Boy hisself—horns, hoof, and all!" said one of the men. "I reckon, Jim, we've dug down until we're purty nigh to Tophet."

"Looks like it, don't it?"

Stooping over the baron, he pulled aside the red devil's hood masking the face.

"Know him?" he asked.

"Never seen him before, but he's better lookin' with his red mask on."

"I am being schlandered in mein schleeb," thought the baron, not pleased by that. "Oof I am nodt—"

"He's unconscious."

"This seems to be an old well, Jim, and we thought we was comin' through into the pueblo. I reckon it might pay me to swarm up there an' see what's outside."

"Indians up there somewhere; I can hear them."

The man climbed the sides of the well, paused a moment near the top, then came down quickly.

"We're inside the pueblo walls," he said, "and it will be easy enough to get up there; but there's a lot of 'em all about, and some of 'em was watchin' the hole. D'ye reckon they pitched this feller down here?"

They wanted to investigate the baron further, and they did not care to risk staying long in the well, so they pulled him through the hole they had excavated and stopped it up by setting a number of stones in place.

After that they disappeared with the lantern and left him lying in utter darkness.

When he could no longer hear them the baron lifted his head and tried to look round him.

"Where I am I tond't know," he thought; "oof I aind't deadt or sweetly treaming or inkinscious from der fall; budt I am some blaces, eenyhow. Oof I am treaming unt I sday py myselluf here, I vill py unt py vake oop; budt oof I ain't treaming unt dose men come pack—"

He scrambled to a sitting position.

"Now, which iss der vay I vos proughdt here py?" he questioned. "Dot iss, oof I vos proughdt. Dose men vendt in dot tirection, so-o I musdt haf come py der odder. I vill dry idt unt see vot shall pe seen by me. Der vay to findt oudt eenything iss py inexberience. So-o here idt goes."

He began to move in the direction of the well.

Having gone but a little distance, he heard footsteps, then saw the light of the lantern. As quickly as he could, the baron dropped over and once more began to "play possum."

But the man had seen him and the game was not a success this time.

"None o' yer nonsense, now!" he urged, touching the baron with his toe. "Come out of it!"

The baron emitted a snore.

"You're asleep, eh? Mebbysso this will wake ye."

The revolver he stuck against the baron's face did not have the effect he expected.

"Here!" he whispered, turning his head, and the alarmed German heard other men coming.

"Oof I am nodt sweetly treaming," thought the baron, "I am in some fixes, py chinger!"

Though he did not open his eyes to look, it seemed to him that half a dozen men gathered round him.

"He's foolin'," said the man who had overtaken him. "I sighted him when he was scramblin' lively; when he heard me he dropped over jest like that. But this will stir him."

He jabbed a pin into the baron's arm. The pain was great and unexpected, but the baron did not cry out.

"Shoo!" he said, trying to make his voice sound like that of a sleepy man. "Dot vly he iss pite me like der tickens. I vonder where I am, eenyhow?"

"You don't know, huh?" said a voice by his ear. "I guess you do, so you'd better wake up. Next time I'll stick a knife into ye."

The baron's eyes fluttered open and stared about, assuming a vacant look.

The light of the lantern showed uncertainly more than half a dozen men, every one masked and heavily armed.

"Now I know dot I am treaming," said the baron; "oddervise—"

"Where do you think ye aire?" was demanded of him.

"Sweetly treaming py my bedt in, at der hodel."

"Where?"

"Vhy, in Sanda Ve, of gourse."

"I guess you can walk, so you come along with us now and stop your sweet dreams. We cal'late we'd like to ask you some questions and know more about you."

Lifted to his feet, the baron staggered and stared round. This was not all assumed; his head spun giddily and he felt weak and sick at the pit of his stomach.

"Who iss idt dot I am sbeaking py?" he asked. "I tond't can see no faces, so you vill excuse der kvestion."

Without answering, they dragged him along, a man on each side to uphold him, while others went before and still others came behind.

At the end of a very short scramble the little party emerged into a small room. The walls were of mud brick, after the Pueblo style, and round the room ran a low, wide bench of the same material, evidently intended to be covered with skins and used as a bed. The only other furniture was a rough wooden table in the middle of the room, with stones ranged round it for chairs.

The baron was pushed down upon one of these stones, and the men who had brought him into the room sat down on the others. The lantern, set on the table, gave the place a feeble red illumination.

Not one of the men had removed his mask.

"Now you're going to answer some questions," said one; "and you'll answer straight, or you'll soon see your finish."

"I am nodt treaming?"

"Not on your life! This is wide-awake, serious business. As you maybe fell into that hole and was muddled when we found you, we'll let that explain your queer actions at first. But you're awake now, and any monkey-doodle business won't go. See?"

"Yaw, I seen," said the baron, studying how to meet the situation.

"In the first place, who aire you?"

Thought of the answer to that brought back the baron's courage. But it can be said also the baron's mind was rapidly clearing. He knew now he was not dreaming.

"Me?" he said, and he puffed out his chest. "You tond't know me?"

"We wouldn't inquire if we did," was the short response.

"Vale, I vill toldt you. I am der Baron von Schnitzenhauser."

"A high-much-a-much Dutchman, eh?"

"A Cherman, nodt a Deutchman."

"It's the same."

"Nodt py no means."

"How did ye git here?"

"Py Toofer."

"Come ag'in."

"I came vonce; dot iss too many dimes yet already. Too mooch oof anyting iss enough."

"What do ye mean by Toofer?"

"Dot iss me mooel."

"You came here on a mule?"

"So far as der grofe oof der biñons iss. Dare I pudt me on my masquerate unt—"

"That's the red suit you're wearing?"

"Idt iss. I pudt him on me in der grofe. Unt when I am loogking at myselluf to seen how mooch I vos hant-some, an Inchun oof der pueblo he steals Toofer unt rides him away kvick. Unt so I chase my face afdher my mooel. Vhen I gome py der pueblo in, somepoty he iss hidt me py der site oof der headt unt I stumble my toe unt town I am goin' into der vell. Der next t'ing vot I know I tond't know nottings."

"There's where we found you?"

"I am guessing idt, budt I tond't know. Vhen I seen dher lighdt I am inkinscious, unt when I am hearing der men saying dot I am foundt I am sdill inkinscious."

The questioner laughed.

"You don't know where you are?"

"I am in some rooms under der bueplo."

"You was goin' to take part in the Indian foolishness, that's why you put on that red-devil suit?"

"You ar-re hidding idt."

"And you was alone?"

"I vos, mit der excebtions oof Toofer."

"Where is he now?"

"I am vishing dot I knowed, but I tond't."

"When you follered the Indian who rid him off, another Indian knocked you windin', and you fell into the well?"

"I oxpect dot iss der troot."

"You ever been in this pueblo before?"

"Neffar. Unt oof I vos oudt oof idt I vouldt keeb me away—dot iss, oof I hadt Toofer."

They drew to one side and conferred in whispers.

"You ar-re sdrangers here," said the baron, when they came back. "Berhabs oof you vouldt dell me somet'ings apoudt yoursellu's I couldt help you more as I haf."

"The only question-bureau that's bein' run here, we're runnin' it," was the curt answer. "Now we're goin' to see if your pockets back up what you have said."

Though the baron had changed into the red-devil clothing, he had not changed his underwear, and in a pocket in his undershirt was a letter that might get him into trouble.

Searching him to the skin, they found the letter:

"DEAR BARON: As we expect to attend the Pueblo fiesta, I send you this notification of the fact. These things are usually interesting, and you may want to join us there. Your friend,
W. F. CODY."

"See here," said the reader of the letter, in a voice acidly suspicious, "why didn't you mention this?"

"Mention vot?"

"This letter. It's from Buffalo Bill."

"Who iss saying tifferendt?" the baron demanded.

"You're his friend, and was to join him here?"

"You haf readt idt gorrecdtly," the baron admitted, for the thing could not be denied.

"What was he comin' here for? Answer that!"

"Idt iss in der ledder."

One of the men snatched it and read it for himself.

"We can't turn him loose," he said; "not now. He'd tell Cody, an' you can see what that would mean. Pistols make a noise, an' aire tharfore resky, so I suggest the knife."

The baron's flesh crawled as he appreciated his sudden peril, but outwardly he remained calm.

"You ar-re making somet'ings oudt of nott'ings," he urged. "Ve vos come to see der fiesta. Idt iss a masquerate, iss idt nodt? So how iss idt oof a harmfulness to anypoty?"

"That's all right," was flung at him, "but you don't go out of here, see?"

"I'm bettin' a hundred to one," cried another, "that Cody has heard about this thing, and that's why he's comin'! Boys, we'll have to lay low a while. Cody wouldn't come out hyer—for he has seen plenty Injun dancin' an' the like—if he didn't have a knife up his sleeve. And it's us he is after. I know it!"

All seemed to know it; or, rather, they believed it.

And the baron, hearing them talk, when again they had drawn away from the table, knew that if he escaped with his life his customary luck would have to juggle the cards for him with unusual cleverness.

"Ach!" he muttered, while the damp sweat came out on his body. "Der barper shob iss going to gif me a close shafes dhis time, I pedt you."

But he remembered that he was Baron von Schnitzenhauser, wearer of the black eagle, and Buffalo Bill's lucky card, so he would not permit himself to despair.

CHAPTER IV.

FOSTER AND THE GANG.

In the power of the masked men whom he had so strangely found under the pueblo, the baron would not have lived an hour longer if it had not been for Velvet Foster; yet this was not because Foster so planned it.

Foster's alarm and curiosity would not permit him to rest without first investigating the hole into which the baron had tumbled.

So when he had talked again with Feather Foot, he slipped down once more and made his way to it. Something going on outside the pueblo had drawn the attention of the Indians, and Foster found the hole unguarded.

Running forward, he slipped over the edge and climbed softly down. In a minute he was at the bottom of the well and in darkness in spite of the little light coming in at the top.

Having felt about in a vain search for the baron, or his body, and found nothing but a jumble of stones, Foster daringly struck a match.

The light showed that a hole at one side had been hastily stopped with stones and earth; the hole itself seemed newly cut. He put out the match by pushing its

head against the wall, and glanced up. No Pueblo voices reached him.

"This is odd," he reflected. "The indications are that Buffalo Bill's Dutchman dug a hole here, crept out of the wall, then stopped up the hole to keep any one from following. But if he did he performed a miracle, and they're not happening frequent in these days."

When no Indian faces appeared for some time at the top, Foster struck another match and took another hasty survey.

The result was that he determined to make an examination of the hole, if one could be found there.

As the stones had been set in loosely, then packed with earth, Foster's work was not difficult. An irregular hole appeared, large enough to admit his body in a stooping position.

Having discovered so much, Foster squandered another match.

"A new tunnel has been cut here, right through the foundation walls of the pueblo. That explains the sounds of the pickax I heard when the Indians wouldn't let me go down into the well."

The situation propounded a puzzle.

"Did the Pueblos know of the tunnel? It doesn't seem so. Otherwise," thought Foster, "why would they ascribe the digging sounds to the devil who had dropped into the well?"

Yet, shrewd as he was, Foster felt certain that if the Pueblos he had talked with at the mouth of the well knew nothing of the digging, other Pueblos did, and he ascribed the tunnel to secret work, of which there was much in preparation for the fiesta.

"These Pueblos are queer Indians," he reflected, as he crept cautiously on his hands and knees through the darkness; "they have a secret society, a kind of Indian freemasonry, and what the secret-society members do the others know nothing about. Perhaps they have been excavating down here for the purpose of building a new lodge room, to be known only to themselves."

Foster tried to feel satisfied with the explanation.

"The Dutchman, of course, wasn't much hurt, even though he fell so heavily. He struck matches, just as I did, and saw where those loose stones had been set in. So he pulled them out and discovered this gallery, just as I did. Then he crawled into it, as I am doing now; only he blocked the hole there at the well, which is a thing I ought to have done, too. He was afraid to try to get out at the top of the well and crept through here, looking for another way out. Perhaps I'll find him in here somewhere."

This consideration caused Foster to exercise even greater caution. He had been striking matches rather freely, but he struck no more of them. He felt his way, groping with his fingers, stared into the darkness, and stopped to listen.

In spite of his extreme care, Foster fell into the arms of a man who was waiting to receive him, apprised of his coming by the flare of the matches.

A struggle ensued when the arms of the man found themselves round Foster's body. Together assailed and assailant went to the floor and thrashed about in the limited space.

Foster was a man of powerful build, and he would have got the better of the man who had attacked him if the latter had not received help. A gurgled cry brought other men scrambling into the tunnel, and Foster's efforts to free himself were in the end unavailing.

When he had been subdued he was dragged on into the room in which not long before the baron had been; and Foster, when the lantern was produced, stared into the same masked faces.

The baron had been hustled away somewhere.

Panting heavily from his exertions, Foster had been flung to the floor, and he did not try to rise, for the lantern revealed a man standing guard over him with a cocked revolver.

Surrounding him, the masked men began to ask questions and pelt him with exclamations. Without at once replying, Foster gathered that the German had been caught by them in much the same way.

"What's yer name?" he was asked.

Velvet Foster had a dozen names, and his ingenuity could readily supply him with a hundred; but he had no time for consideration, and used the first that popped into his mind. By chance it was one he had used a year or more before, when he was doing confidence work up in Dakota.

"Dan Ely," he said.

One of the masked men pushed nearer, caught up the lantern, and held it before Foster's face.

"I used to know a Dan Ely," he said.

"If you'd pull that rag off your features, maybe I'd know you," was Foster's response. "Take it from me that I'm not good at second-sight."

Being a rascal and thief himself, a masked face did not scare Foster as it might have scared another man. He knew instinctively that he had fallen into the hands of men who were lawless, and in the brief time that had been given him he had tried to determine what their presence meant in that place.

The man looked him over carefully.

"He was a big man like you—reg'lar Buffalo Bill sort of beauty; but if you're him you've changed. What scratched ye up that way?"

Foster laughed.

"You're Bill Jenkins," he said, recalling the fellow's voice. "I'm Dan Ely, and I met you in Dakota, where I was called Dakota Dan. As for my face"—his voice sobered—"lay that to Buffalo Bill and a lot of Navahos."

The man fired questions at him, a dozen of them.

"Boys," he said to the others, who had been interested listeners, "I know this feller, and you can bet he is all right, unless he has reformed lately. And I reckon that to reform Dakota Dan you'd have to do it with a meat ax or a shotgun."

He removed his mask, and Foster saw the familiar features he had known.

"Shake!" said Foster, extending his hand, and he felt that the game had been won when Jenkins took it.

But Jenkins was the only one of the group who removed his mask; the others were still wary and sought further proof of the claim that Foster had made.

"I'm willing to share information," Foster said to them, "and I fancy that in interest my story can match yours, whatever yours may be; and I'll go first, you to follow, if it pleases you. Otherwise, when I'm through, let me out of this hole, and I'll keep my mouth closed about it."

"Mebbyso you'll do that, anyhow!" said one of them significantly, tapping the revolver he had pulled when Foster was brought into the little room.

Foster laughed beguilingly.

"Dead men tell no tales, eh?" he said. "But I don't think you will kill me, as you have perhaps done that Dutchman of Bill Cody's, after you have heard me through."

This was meant to astonish them, and probably it did; anyway, it plainly stirred their interest. He explained it when they pelted him with questions.

"Now that I've eased your minds as to how I happened to get down into this place, and all I know about Cody's Dutchman and the red clothes he was wearing, I'll ease my own by telling about the red welts that disfigure me."

He slipped off his coat and drew up his shirt sleeves, bared his neck and chest, with other parts of his body, and displayed the red welts made by the cactus thongs. There were cactus stings on his face, too. But they did not disfigure as much now as the malignant look which had come over it.

"Let me tell you how I got these," he said, his voice trembling. "You have spoken of Bill Cody, and I owe them to him."

"He belted ye that way?"

"Never! Bill Cody has never seen the day when he could have handled me in that style, unless he had a lot of men with him to assist in the job. But indirectly he was the cause of it."

"I'm going to string an honest tale. You are my kind of men; I know it, though I haven't seen your faces; also, if I do, you'll be my friends, because of what Cody done for me and because men like us who have got the law against us all the time can't afford not to hang together."

"Otherwise," said a would-be wit of the party, springing the old chestnut, "we are likely to hang separately."

"Just so. That remark, too, proves that I sized you up right."

"We ain't confessin' anything," reminded the man, who apparently was the leader; "we're jest listening to yours."

"I'll make it short," said Foster. "You've noticed that I look a good deal like Cody. With a little make-up I can pass myself off as Buffalo Bill on any crowd that don't know him too intimately. I passed myself off as Buffalo Bill at Maxwell's Ranch, where they have a new manager, and made out of it a thousand dollars and a good horse."

"Then I went to Santa Fe. A New Mexican señorita had turned a necklace of pearls over to the priests who have charge of the college and church of San Miguel, and I wanted those pearls."

"To get them I went to the priest who had charge of them, told him that I was the wonderful and noted scout and Indian fighter, Buffalo Bill, and asked to see the pearls."

"He had 'em locked in a box in a good safe. I might have nitroglycerined the safe, but this other way was easier and seemed safer. The priest took the pearls out of the box and let me handle them. When I pretended to drop them back, I didn't. Likely you have turned similar tricks and know how it is done."

"Trouble came from the fact that the genuine and original Buffalo Bill had struck Santa Fe that same afternoon. So I had to work quick and get out of the town quick. I hardly had time. Before I had been gone from the old college five minutes, Buffalo Bill came there, and ten minutes afterward he was trying to hit my trail."

"I had a good horse—the one I 'borrowed' at Maxwell's—and I lit out for the Navaho country, which I reached all right. Knowing that Buffalo Bill was hot after me, I tried to mix bad medicine for him with the Navahos. I told them that I was Buffalo Bill. In the night I was trying to run off their pony herd so that they would be so hot against Buffalo Bill that they would kill him on sight."

"There is where my real troubles began. A young Navaho had spotted me. When I tried to turn my trick at the pony corral he showed up and made trouble. Of course I drove a knife into him. That mixed more bad medicine for Buffalo Bill."

"But in making my drive at the young Navaho I dropped the bag that I was carrying the pearls in, and didn't know it until the next day. Then I started back to see where I had dropped them."

"Cody reached the Navaho village and was having trouble there, all right. But it was nothing to the trouble I got into. My young Indian, that I haven't told you about yet, had followed me, and the Navahos were holding him."

"I got the pearls by choking the squaw that was wearing them. Then I tried to release my Indian, and I was captured."

"Cody patched his trouble with the Navahos, took the pearls, and hied him back to Santa, leaving me with the half-mad Navahos when he could have released me. Then they took me out and gave me what they call the dance of the cactus thongs."

"You'll never want to know what it is personally, but it is the treatment they give their prisoners when they don't want to kill them outright."

"I was set between two long rows of Navahos armed with whips made of braided cactus; and I was told that if I could go down between the lines and get out into the desert, they would let me go; otherwise they would kill me."

"The only thing that saved my life was the Buffalo Bill clothing I had been wearing when I hit the Navaho town. They had made it into a bundle for me to use if I got out into the desert alive, and I made it take all the lashes possible."

"I got through alive. But you can judge what that kind of hell was by looking at me now. For a day I lay in the desert, furious with fever. And I don't know even now just how I got out. But I found a hut that was abandoned down by the Rincon arroyos, with a well of water there, and some old food scraps. There I stayed a week, and it seemed a month, picking the cactus spines out of

my hide. You can see that I didn't do a good job, for I'm full of them yet.

"By and by I reached this pueblo, where I had been once before, and knew I'd meet friends, and I've been laying up here ever since. My Indian boy is here."

The lantern light showed Foster's face pale and covered with perspiration except where the red of the cactus irritation showed in spots.

"That's all," he said; "but wasn't it enough? Perhaps you can understand now how much I hate Bill Cody."*

CHAPTER V.

THE TURQUOISE TREASURE.

Following Bill Jenkins, the man who had unmasked and revealed himself to Foster, the men drew to one side for a conference.

Velvet Foster watched them from the stone on which he had been seated, his crafty eyes noting their arms and dress, the way they walked, and other peculiarities.

"This is a queer deal," he thought. "I follow Buffalo Bill's Dutchman, and I run into this gang down here under the pueblo that even the Pueblos know nothing about, I'm sure. Only for Jenkins, they might have put my lamp out, too, as I think they did the Dutchman's. They're going to talk the thing over and decide to how much they can believe of what I've said and what they'll do with me. I might make a break for the tunnel and the well right now, but I'd get lead if I did. Besides, I think I can make a hitch with these fellows, and I want to know what their lay is. They must have mined into this place, but where from?"

Gathered round Bill Jenkins, the masked men talked and talked. Foster watched them closely.

"Some of 'em don't more than half believe that Jenkins has ever seen me before," concluded Foster, catching a word now and then; "and they're the boys and would like to knife me and poke me out of the way in a hole somewhere. I'm hoping they don't get the better of Jenkins."

When they came back, it became at once apparent that Jenkins had won them over; and he now became spokesman, though he was not the real leader of the party.

"Dan," he said, "they've made up their minds to take you in on this little deal, mainly on my say-so; for they didn't know ye, an' some didn't want to trust ye, as this is a ticklish bit of work we're on here. But I know you're all right, and I've told 'em you'd be worth a dozen of any other men right now, because you've been in this pueblo before."

"That's right," Foster assented; "I lived here a number of months one time."

"That's the way I put it up to 'em," said Jenkins; "that, knowing the pueblo, you could guide us about in it, maybe, if it was needed; besides, I told 'em something of your record, and that you would do to tie to."

"Now, this is our lay, right in a nutshell: We're here for treasure. You ain't never heard of the turquoise treasure?"

This was so astounding that Foster could hardly conceal his surprise and his pleasure.

"I never heard of it," he was forced to admit.

"That's sing'lar," declared Jenkins, "seein' that you've been here before. But o' course these hyer Pueblos could be expected to keep it dark and clean away from a white man."

"The way we came to learn about it was like this: Simmons, hyer, who is our leader, was sheep-herdin' on the Navaho boundary, him bein' at the time in hard luck and needin' to keep out of the way of officers, when along came a Pueblo Indian from this town who had been mangled in a fight with wolves."

"The Pueblo had got his last call when Simmons took him into his sheep hut and did all he could for him, and because of that the Pueblo give him some little trinkets, together with a pair of turquoises big enough to make your eyes water to look at 'em."

From his pocket the man called Simmons took a couple of blue turquoises larger and finer than any Velvet Foster had ever seen, and passed them to Foster.

*For a full account of Foster's adventures and misdeeds see last week's issue, No. 275, "Buffalo Bill's Handful of Pearls."

"Look 'em over," he invited.

As the men, with the exception of Jenkins, were still masked, it struck Foster as a singular situation; but he examined the turquoises with as much care as he could by the light of the lantern.

"Big ones," he said, passing them back, "and valuable."

"When I asked the Injun where he got 'em," said Simmons, "he hesitated at first; but finally he told me that in his pueblo, hid away underground, there were bushels of 'em, roped into jewelry for the Pueblo gods that were kept down there."

"You see," Jenkins explained, "maybe as you know the Pueblos claim now to be good Catholics and Christians; but there are plenty of men who know them well who say they aire as much savages as they ever was before the Spaniards came."

"We ain't up on such things, but this story told by that dyin' Pueblo to Simmons seems to go to prove it. The Pueblos, you know, have now and then gala days and the like, and during them times they have secret rites in the underground rooms that they call estufas. What they do down there has been written about by some white men, but I doubt if the white men really knew; the Pueblos keep the whole thing too close; not even the priests of the Catholic church aire let go into them estufas."

"This Pueblo I'm tellin' you about," said Simmons, "told me that much; he was an old heathen, and still worshiped his heathen gods, same as his forefathers did, and because he hoped I'd become of the Pueblo belief and go to the Pueblo heaven so's he could see me again by and by—he had come to like me a heap, you'll notice—he gave me them two turquoises, which had come from the fringe of the robe worn by the god he worshiped."

"Mebbyso," said Jenkins, "that sounds fishy to you, and maybe the Pueblo lied even when he was dyin'. Anyhow, we're hyer to find out. A year ago an artist came to this place to make pictures of the Pueblos. Out there just beyond the wall he built him a little house, which the Pueblos let him do. Sense he went away nobody has been livin' in it."

"The house stands behind the pueblo and is hid by some trees—the artist built it under the trees because artists like trees and shade. We slipped into it at night, bringing grub and water and a few tools. Every night a man slips out to git more water, and once we have sent a man off for food."

"All day long we lay still, but when night comes we go to gopherin'. To-night we broke through at the end of a tunnel we had run, and came out in what looked to be an old well, when we was hopin' to break into that idol room."

"Right on top of it, as you know, things began to happen. First it was the Dutchman that we found layin' there, fakin' that he was dead or asleep. And then you came."

"So you don't know where that turquoise treasure is, after all?" said Foster, in a tone of disappointment and regret.

"It's in this pueblo," said Simmons. "I know when a man is lyin', and that dyin' Pueblo didn't tell me no lies."

"He might have been out of his head," said Foster.

"No, he wasn't that at the time he told me."

"We thought we had picked on a good time for the work," said Jenkins, "on account of the preparations for the fiesta; we had figgered that into our calculations. For you see right now, and for a month or so, the Pueblos have been so excited over that that they haven't had time to think of anything else, and all the practice races and the like have been run at the front of the pueblo, drawing the people there; no one has come round to look into the artist's hut, though we was ready for that if it had happened."

"The question is," urged Simmons, "can you help us? If you can, we're willin'. Help us to locate that turquoise treasure, and you'll have an equal share with us in it. And you can bet," he added, "that if we do once locate it we'll carry it off if we have to fight all the Indians in this village."

"I'll help," Foster promised eagerly. "I'll do everything I can."

"While the fiesta is going on," said Simmons, "the

Pueblos will be outside and on top of the houses; then is our time to go through the old beehive; and, as you know it all, we ought to do it easy. The treasure is under the pueblo, the Indian said—in a room under the pueblo. Likely at some time during the feasting and the games there will be some worship of the old gods, and the Indians will then go to that room. Of course I can't outline the thing to you—how you're to do—but something like that was our idea."

"I'll be glad to help," said Foster, his splotched face glowing with interest. "And," he added, "if it's here we'll get it."

"We've figgered that we would do it without your help," declared Simmons, "and we shore ought to with it."

"The only trouble," said Foster, as if he had thought it over quickly, "is that Buffalo Bill is going to be here. I'm sure of that, or that Dutchman wouldn't have come."

"We know that, too," admitted Simmons; "but how is that going to interfere? He'll be outside, and he'll not even dream that we are here."

"I guess we can work it," said Foster.

"Work it!" cried Simmons. "Shore we can; we've got to!"

CHAPTER VI.

BUFFALO BILL'S SEARCH.

"It's plain as a signal smoke, necarnis," said Pawnee Bill, speaking to his noted pard, "that the baron is here ahead of us, for there is old Toofer."

The remark was made as Buffalo Bill's party drew up by the walls of the pueblo and saw the baron's mule picking at the coarse grass, the mule and the spot in which he grazed being visible through a break in the wall.

"I ter me, too," said the old borderman, Nick Nomad, "thet Schnitz has been makin' hisself solid with these hyar ki-yis, fer Toofer is in a corral jest as ef he war at home hyar, ef my eyes don't deceive me."

"You're right, Nomad. The Dutchman has made a hit with the Pueblos. Likely we'll find him ranged up in front of a festal board somewhere."

But they did not find the baron at a festal board or anywhere else.

A big procession had started from the little white chapel at one end of the pueblo—a festal procession with children flower-crowned and men and women in holiday attire. Borne aloft, at their head, was the effigy of a saint.

The attention of every other Indian was drawn by this procession. Out beyond the pueblo building a few white men had gathered, idle curiosity seekers.

In the midst of them Nomad singled out an old friend, and rode over to greet him.

"Put 'er thar!" said Nomad, sliding out of his saddle and extending his horny palm. "Ef 'tain't Nate Hoskins then I'm a billy goat. Out hyar ter enj'y yerself, I perceive. Waal, the ki-yis has shore got the thing to goin' 'round."

For an hour or more they talked over old times.

Buffalo Bill and Pawnee passed on, with Little Cayuse trailing behind. They were mounted. Now and then they met some one they knew and stopped for conversation.

"I hev heard," said a friend whom the scout met, "thet the ruckus ye had with the Navahos shore war excitin', so ter speak, and thet the Navis put the final kibosh on that tickle called Velvet Foster."

"I hadn't heard that," said the scout, "but I feared it. I wouldn't get Foster out of their hands, though I tried hard enough, for he had knifed a Navaho."

"They gave him the dance o' the cactus thorn, and he did out in the desert from the effects of it; that's the way it reached me. You didn't want to turn him loose, I reckon?"

"I would have brought him back to Santa Fe and had him sent to prison by a New Mexican court for stealing those pearls. If the Navahos killed him I'm sorry."

"He'd have got you through, all right, without any worry, Cody, if he could have done it."

Wondering their way back to the point in the wall where Toofer had been sighted, Nomad rejoined them, and they rode in through the wall.

"Hurry, you old rattle!" Pawnee called to the mule. "Where is your master?"

The mule stopped picking at the scanty grass, threw up his head, recognized the party, and emitted a hoarse bray, then came trotting up to the corral gate.

Buffalo Bill caught the attention of a passing Pueblo Indian and asked him if he had seen the owner of the mule anywhere.

The Pueblo stared and seemed frightened.

Buffalo Bill changed the form of his question and threw in a few Indian signs.

"Mule got no master," said the Indian, showing that he had understood at first.

"Well, the man who came here on his back; put it that way if it suits you better. Did you see him?"

"Pueblo ride mule back," said the Indian.

"A Pueblo rode him in?"

"Si. Pueblo rode him in. But——"

He stared round with a certain air of fright, then would have passed on.

"Stop!" the scout ordered.

The Pueblo stopped.

"You were about to say something else. What was it?"

The Indian looked round again, much as if he expected something to jump at him.

"Devil chase um," he said.

"Waal!" Nomad rumbled. "What's this hyar?"

"Red devil chase um," repeated the Indian.

"You didn't see a large-bodied man dressed like this?"

With words and signs the scout described the German.

"Me no see um."

"You didn't see any white man with the mule?"

"No see um white man."

"What did you put the mule in the corral there for?"

"Keep um till can find Pueblo."

"Let me see if I get this right. A Pueblo Indian rode the mule in here, and he was chased by a red devil. But you cannot now find the Pueblo Indian?"

"Si," the Indian assented.

"You didn't know him—is that it?"

The Indian explained that all the Pueblos who beheld the singular thing were too frightened to take notice; but that afterward they had expected the Pueblo to appear with some explanation, but he had not done so.

"Think mebbysso devil carry um off," he said, and again he stared round as if he half expected to see the red devil rise up and come for him.

"Me go," he urged nervously.

"Not till you answer some more questions," said the scout.

But he had told, they discovered, all that he knew.

"Waal, what does yer think o' a yarn like thet?" said Nomad, when the trembling Indian had hurried off. "Makes me think o' ther doin's of whiskizos. Ther baron never believed none in 'em, and mebbysso now——"

"Old Diamond," Pawnee cut in, "when ever you hear on your whiskizos thet theories you see me a calculate for the nut fact ry."

"Then you explain et—what yer has just heard!"

"It was a Pueblo joke, in my opinion; but this fellow wasn't in the secret and it frightened him. Yesterday the Pueblos spent all the afternoon in killing the devil; you know how they do it. Some Pueblo with a sense of the ridiculous made up as a devil and played that trick on the others. I'll admit—he took a cigar out of one of the leather receptacles in the crown of his Stetson—that doesn't tell us anything about the baron, though."

Buffalo Bill had stopped another Pueblo and was putting him through the question mill. The result did not differ from that achieved before. The Pueblo was frightened by the mere mention of the subject, and got away as soon as he could.

Finally Buffalo Bill asked to be conducted to the headman of the village, making the request of an Indian held up for the purpose.

"Headman no can talk now," this Pueblo explained; "him very busy."

"Waal, does thet signerfy," Nomad coughed out, "thet we've got ter hang round an' try ter git at this bizness no more until this fiesta is plum' over with?"

"Headman no can talk now; him in procession."

They had to wait until the procession was over; that

meant more than an hour, at the end of which time Buffalo Bill gained speech with the headman.

He was a lusty fellow, well along in years, his eyes red and blinking from long exposure to the hot New Mexican sun.

He answered civilly enough, though he did not fancy the presence of white men at the fiesta.

"White man make um laugh at the mysteries," he explained; "we no like um white man come."

Buffalo Bill explained that neither he nor his friends had come there to make a jest of the Pueblo mysteries and customs. And with signs and words he repeated his inquiries and described the baron.

The Pueblo declared that no man of that description had visited the pueblo. A number of Indians summoned by him said the same, and told the same story—that the mule had been ridden in by a Pueblo, and a red devil had pursued mule and rider.

"What became of the red devil?" Buffalo Bill inquired.

"What becomes of all devils?" was the cryptic answer of the headman. "They dive into holes or into cracks in the walls or fly up into the air and are gone."

"This devil disappeared in that way?" persisted the scout.

"He dived into a hole and has not been seen since."

"Let me see that hole," was Buffalo Bill's request.

"It is over there," said the headman, nodding in the direction; "but it cannot be seen by a white man. Even if a Pueblo went there it would make trouble for him and all in the village. That the devil went in there we know, for he has been heard; he was digging with an ax or hatchet to make a hole through the rocks to get out; the medicine man has been making charms, and they make the devil sick and he wants to get out of the pueblo."

Buffalo Bill did not try to force his way to the hole into which the red devil had disappeared; he was too wise to anger the Pueblos in that way.

"Of course there is no mystery about this at all, Pard Bill," Pawnee declared placidly, as they roved round seeking further light on what seemed a dark subject. "Schnitz lost his mule—perhaps the brute pitched him. A Pueblo found the mule and brought him here. And the red devil was some Indian playing a joke, or else a pure figment of Indian imagination. Nomad ought to be able to tell how it's done, for I've known him to see whiskizos where there wasn't a thing but naked rocks and sand."

CHAPTER VII.

A PUZZLING DISCOVERY.

Pawnee Bill's conclusion seemed sensible, at any rate.

Acting on it, Buffalo Bill sent Little Cayuse forth to search for the mule's trail out beyond the pueblo walls.

"I'm giving you a hard job, Cayuse," he said to the Piute; "the Pueblos have trodden everything down close by the walls; but out beyond somewhere, if you go far enough, you can perhaps find Toofer's tracks. When you do, either back track them until you learn something, or lead the discovery to me."

Little Cayuse set his eagle feather proudly erect, tightened his belt, and slipped off through the crowd that thronged about the walls.

Within half an hour he was back.

"Me find um," he reported, his eyes glistening with gratified pride.

"Just where were they?"

"This side piñon trees," said the Piute. "Me come to tell quick."

"The Piute didn't back track, necarnis, and that will give us the pleasure," said Pawnee.

"You're coming round to the belief that something has happened to the baron?"

"No, Pard Bill; by which I mean nothing connected with the Pueblos, which was a thing I feared at first. Toofer has probably shaken him out of the saddle and left him to come along on foot. The baron is a bad walker, and he loves to smoke, so I expect to find him sitting under a tree somewhere pulling at that long pipe."

They anticipated a long trail, but it was a short one, leading back only to the grove of piñons.

The grove had not been entered by any one since the

baron leaped out of it in pursuit of Feather Foot and Toofer. So they came at once on the baron's clothing, scattered round the tree where he had admired his get-up in the looking-glass. The little mirror was there, too, with the baron's weapons, and even his shoes.

The discovery was as astonishing as it was unexpected.

"Necarnis, I pass," said Pawnee; "you tell us what this means."

The Piute made signs with crossed fingers and backed off, staring, while old Nomad sniffed the air suspiciously and looked about.

"Seems ter me thet I plumb git ther smell o' sulphur," Nomad declared. "I reckon, Buffler, ye don't sniff anything suspiciouslike, too?"

They looked the ground over. The sharp hoofs of the mule had cut into the grassy sand, but the tracks of the baron and the Indian were not to be seen readily. So the net result of their examination rather put them up in the air.

"Whiskizos," sniffed Nomad; "et war shore suthin' o' ther kind. Ef not, say what et was, will ye? Ther baron must er hid ther mule inter this grove; then suthin' happened ter him thet ain't onderstandable. He war jest natcherly stripped and kerried off naked. Ef not—"

Theories multiplied, but none was satisfactory.

"I don't see any sense in trailing the mule back toward Santa Fe," said Buffalo Bill, "when we have proof here that the baron reached this point."

"Et mout be this way," suggested the borderman, starting out with a new idea. "Ther baron mout er been stripped somewhar's else, an' his clo'es bring to this place. Say thet ther Injun done et, after mebbysso knockin' him on ther head. Then my guess would be thet while ther ki-yi war pawin' over the clo'es hyar thet red devil jumped out at him and he flew on the back of the mule, and the clo'es war left right whar he had been examinin' them."

"A ki-yi would have to be scared bad, old Diamond, to go off without taking those revolvers."

"I'm figgerin' et so much thet way, Pawnee, thet I'm goin' ter look fer a Pueblo redskin thet has had his ha'r turned white overnight."

The possibility that the baron had been attacked before reaching the grove, suggested by Nomad, caused them to lose much valuable time in exploring the trail of the mule in the direction of Santa Fe.

The better part of the afternoon had been passed before they again approached the pueblo, after making another search of the piñon grove.

The Pueblos were in the midst of their first day's festivities and oblivious of everything else. The flat roofs of the pueblo were packed with them; the street before it was black with them, and they were yelling to "beat the band" to encourage the wrestlers who were struggling for mastery in the street.

This street, if it can be called so properly, ran all round the pueblo, which was an Indian "village"—that is the meaning of the word pueblo—of the beehive type; a big communal house, each story receding from the one below it in staircase fashion, and the roofs flat.

Buffalo Bill had brought along the baron's clothing rolled in a blanket, also his shoes and weapons and the little looking-glass.

These he took to the headman as soon as the latter's attention could be gained for an audience.

Gravely the old fellow heard the scout's story and looked at the articles exhibited.

"It was the red devil," he said, much impressed; "he carried away your friend, and he tried to catch the Pueblo who rode the mule. We think he caught him and carried him off, too, as we cannot find him."

In quoting the headman here and previously, no effort has been made to give his exact language, which could not be done with type, for half of it consisted of grunts and shakes of the head, and much of the other half was slang.

"You will show me the hole in which the red devil was seen to disappear?" Buffalo Bill requested.

The headman moved over to the one window in the small square room next to that in which the interview was held.

"I can show it to you," he said, "but I warn you not not to go close to it; for, as I said before, the devil was

heard moving in there, and he was using a spade or pickax or a hatchet."

The idea had some time before occurred to the scout and his friends that the sounds heard might have been caused by the "red devil" falling and wounding himself.

But they still harbored the belief that the red devil had been a Pueblo practical joker.

"I should like to go down into that hole."

The headman caught the scout by the arm.

"No!" he said.

"But if I am not afraid!"

"The Pueblos are afraid; that is what I mean. The devil might come out of the hole in pursuit of you, and injure my people. It cannot be done."

Buffalo Bill was not so sure of that.

When the headman returned with him into the outer room, where the scout had shown the baron's belongings, they were gone, with the blanket that had contained them.

"A thief has been here and taken the roll," said the scout. "Either that, or one of your friends has removed them for some purpose."

This was so plain that he was hardly prepared for the part into which the headman was thrown.

"It is the work of the devil!" he cried. "He is pursuing you! He carried off your friend, and now he seeks you. This is his work. So you and your friends must get out of the village at once."

Buffalo Bill expostulated.

But he had to depart without the privilege of making a search for the roll.

"Now, what do you think of that for ki-yi foolishness?" said Pawnee, disgusted.

The Piute waved crossed fingers again through the air to ward off witchcraft, and once more old Nomad began to talk of the work of whiskizoes.

"Jest what do you think of et?" Nomad demanded.

Pawnee scratched a fire stick and drew it across the end of his cigar.

"If I should tell the truth, old Diamond," he confessed, "I should probably have to admit that we are all on the same line."

"I don't think that anything has happened to Schnitz?"

"I don't know that it hasn't, but I don't think it has. That isn't plain? Well, now, will you tell me what ground we have for supposing that Schnitz has been here at all?"

"His clo'es an' his mule. I has knowed men ter be hung on less evidence."

"You couldn't hang even an argument on that. Perhaps we have been jest kidin' around all afternoon like a lot of Indians, over nothing. Suppose Schnitz is right now in Santa Fe, and—"

"Would he be ther naked?"

"Don't talk foolish, old Diamond! He could hev clothes, couldn't he? And that's what he'd have to do, wouldn't he, if some one stole his clothing and weapons and his mule and kited off with them? Is we can suppose that the thief was a Pueblo, then we have settled the biggest end of the mystery and can look for our German friend at the other end of that north trail."

Nomad smiled; the argument seemed to be convincing and he did not like it—he preferred the mystery.

"Frum ther clo'es, now," he said. "We found 'em in ther pile'n grove, ye reckon, all scattered round. Ye can dispose of that just as easy, I allow."

"Sure thing I can, Nomad. The Pueblo thief, though, he would look his last over before venturing with it into the village, and he is dead in the grove for the purpose. There he was surprised by the really kid who was playing red devil for the fun of the thing. They made him hit the back of Towler and lie in it for the village; and the red devil, still for the fun of the thing, stretched it after him."

He had talked, instead of smoking, and his cigar had gone out, as he said it.

"What do you think of it?" he demanded.

"That I should plumb hate ter haf ter sleep wif ve o' rights of yer imagination dances round that way in yer dreamin'; that's all."

Pawnee turned to Buffalo Bill, who, though listening, had apparently been pondering.

"What is your conclusion, Cody?"

"My conclusion is," said the scout, "that I'm going into the pueblo as soon as it is dark and I'm going down into that hole. I don't expect to find the baron there, though."

"Then what do you expect to find?"

"I don't know."

"Does yer think et ther baron is still in Santy Fee?" demanded Nomad.

"I don't know."

"Wow! Ye belongs ter ther Know Nothings."

"So do we all in this case," said the scout quietly.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRAPPED IN THE OLD WELL.

"Whyever is Buffler stayin' so long?" said Nomad.

"Because he hasn't got back, old Diamond."

"An' has met up with trouble," said Nate Hoskins, amending Pawnee's statement.

Pawnee Bill shifted his position uneasily, smoked up, then removed his cigar and stared thoughtfully at the ruby-red end.

"I'm afraid you're right, Hoskins, though I hate like fire to admit it. Pard Bill has been gone from us three hours or more now, and not a word. He wouldn't do it if all had gone well."

"Cain't we git in and look round a bit?" said Hoskins.

"Injun orders aire ter stay out," said Nomad; "but I has an idee that I'm on the point o' disabagin' them orders."

"Cody," said Hoskins, "told us to camp down here under these trees, just beyond the pueblo wall, while he made a sneak round inside to see if he could find whar that mule-chasin'-devil himself meant, him bein' afraid that it might trouble had come to his Dutchman, though he wouldn't confess it; an' he said, you reckon, that he'd be back inside of an hour."

"If he didn't hit or snag," Nomad added; "you reckon he got that in."

"But he didn't give any orders what we was to do if he didn't get back on time, and that is whar the trouble lays, gents. Besides, how're we goin' to hunt fer a man in that beehive when we don't know whar to hunt; an' would he want us to come huntin' for him if so he he ain't in trouble? It would sure stir them Pueblos up like sticks a pole into a hornet's nest."

Pawnee arose and walked out to the edge of the trees. When he came back he had made up his mind.

"I suggest that Hoskins stay here to tell Pard Bill what we're doing, in case he strays into camp while we're gone. I'll take Nomad and Cayote and we'll go back."

"Pawnee," said Hoskins reproachfully, "is it fair for you to go pokin' into danger and leave me hyar in peace an' happiness wif nothin' to make ter make me afraid? I'm votin' that we sticks up a sign hyar for Cody ter read if he comes back while we're gone. If you write it in a plain hand, what's ter hinder him from knowin' whar we aire jest as well as if I stayed to tell him?"

"Stickin' to him," said Pawnee, "except that some Pueblos might find it and lay it off before Cody saw it. I think, Hoskins, you'd better stay."

"You see, then," said Hoskins; "but if you hunt into anywhar that calls for help, he out a yell, and this onday will come chokin' no matter if he has to walk on a pavement of Pueblo heads. Only look out for yourselves; Pueblos aire what' powerful, but they're mighty on attain whar their reason an' imagination are concerned."

By the margin of the well, where it was broken where the mule and rider and the red devil had gone through, Pawnee Bill and his companions found a Pueblo standing as if on guard.

"They reckon some white man or nuther may try ter git in," said Nomad, looking down and whispering the words. "An' they ain't goin' ter permit et. So, Pawnee, we're staid right hyar."

"Oh, are we?"

Pawnee took time to think it over, then he studied the Indian's position.

"As we've got to go through," he said, "if we're to do anything, we can't be surprised. There is a piece of adobe paving track which you are to shove out into the dust off there, Nomad, when I get close enough to that fellow for rope work."

He slid the stone into the hands of the borderman, and began to hitch forward.

A minute later the stone went sailing through the air and fell in the dust with a "spat" that brought the Indian out of the shadow for the purpose of investigating.

As he did so, the dark form of Pawnee moved in the shadow and something serpentine shot out. It was the coil of a lariat; and the noose dropping round the Indian's neck, he was jerked from his feet without being able to make an outcry.

"Good enough!" Nomad breathed, crawling up. "When et comes ter rope work, Pawnee, thar ain't any thet goes ahead o' ye."

"Thanks! While I'm pinning that bouquet to my noble breast, will you slip the moccasins off this fellow? I've got a grip on his neck that will keep him still."

"Whyever——"

"Yank 'em off; then the strips of white buckskin that he's got wrapped round his legs; and we'll want his blanket and any other little Pueblo marks of identification; for I'm going to put them on Little Cayuse and make a full-blown Pueblo out of him."

The articles came off in double-quick time.

"We'll not need all the stuff he's got on, though it isn't much," said Pawnee. "Hustle those things on you, Cayuse, while Nomad and I do a diamond-hitch play with this fellow's arms and legs."

By the time they had tied and gagged the Indian, Little Cayuse had made himself into a very presentable Pueblo. Then they carried the bound Pueblo out into the darkness and left him there, while they went on through the break in the wall.

The staircase roofs of the pueblo blazed with bonfires and were crowded with Indians, while the open space round the pueblo also blazed with leaping fires. The celebration was in full swing, though the hour had grown late.

"Cody said that well-like hole was right about this spot, I take it," remarked Pawnee, leading on boldly. "Nomad and I will go down into it. Cayuse, you're to stand guard above, to give us warning. If a fight comes, you cut and run, for you can help us dressed that way if you are free, and wouldn't be worth a peso to us if you were captured. Do you understand that?"

"Me sabe."

The place was a sort of court not far from the corral where Toofer was still held; and the shadows there were thick, in spite of the flaming fires on top of the pueblo.

Pawnee Bill lowered himself into the well, and old Nomad came climbing down behind him.

"Queer thing," said Nomad, when they were together at the bottom and he had felt out with his hands; "seems ter be nuthin' but an old well thet has gone dry, or more likely an old cistern."

"I think I'll risk a fire stick."

Pawnee struck a match, which he shielded under his hat, and together he and Nomad examined the bottom and the walls. They saw at once the stones that had been set in position, where the hole had been which the turquoise hunters had made.

Pawnee tested the rocks there before the match burned out.

"There has been a hole cut here lately, and then blocked up," he declared. "If we had a pick we might do something. What was it the headman said about a hatchet or pick being heard down here?"

"He thought the devil they had seen might er dug his way out down'ard."

"We have figured that Cody came here; he said he meant to. Could he have been snaked through that hole by Pueblos and then the hole walled up? It seems a wild notion."

"We'll have ter loosen up them rocks and see."

But when Nomad began to claw at the rocks, Little Cayuse, leaning over the well, whispered down a warning.

"Heap plenty Injun comin'," he said. "Me make um slide."

"We'll have to postpone this, I'm afraid," said Pawnee. "Let's swarm to the top and see what that mean."

When they had swarmed up they were ready to drop back again. A score of Indians charged the mouth of the well with muskets that began to belch fire.

"Wow!" Nomad bellowed, as a musket flamed over his head. "Whyever did——"

When another flamed by it, driving powder and smoke downward into his face, Nomad dropped back and reached the bottom with a thud.

Pawnee came down beside him.

The Pueblos gained the mouth of the well, and, poking over their guns, began to shoot into it.

"Lucky for us, old Diamond, that there are no bullets in those guns," said Pawnee, pulling the old trapper down. "They're fighting the devil with fire, you see; they think he is in this old well."

The roar of muskets at the top of the well was deafening.

"On your face—flat on your face!" urged Pawnee.

"Already I'm rootin' like er hawg," grumbled the trapper. "But how'm I goin' ter keep my breathin' works goin' wi' my nose stuck hyar in ther dirt an this place so fillin' wi' gunpowder smoke? Waugh!"

Above the roar of the muskets rose the yells of the Pueblos, who, with loud outcries, as well as the expenditure of gunpowder, were trying to scare off the devil they had seen go into the well and who afterward had been heard digging there.

"There's one fortunate thing——"

"Thar ain't nuthin' fort'nit about this," grunted Nomad. "I tell ye I'm so fillin' up wi' gunpowder gas that I'll soon be thinkin' I'm a cannon an' blow myself up."

"The fortunate thing is the Pueblos are so afraid of the devil that you couldn't hire one of them to come down here; so we can stay safely enough."

"Great Texas toads!" snorted the trapper. "Me—I don't want'er stay!"

The terrific din was kept up for about five minutes, and the gunpowder smoke filled the well for a much longer period.

"The shootin' is stopped," said Nomad. "Does thet mean thet ther devil is dead?"

"I'll pass that over to a Pueblo to answer."

"Hearin' thet racket, any decent devil what wasn't killed by et would sure tuck his tail between his legs and hike home. Seems like ther ki-yis has gone erway, Pawnee."

"I don't hear them, but you can bet they're watching round."

"What do yer think o' this hyar, anyhow?"

"The whole layout? It opens up a bag of tricks that would be mighty interesting if we had time to enjoy it."

Nomad flopped over and looked at the top of the well. "Smoke's thinnin' out thar," he said; "which shows et is risin, an' ef it is risin' thar is air comin' in from below. I reckon, Pawnee, ef we could dig them rocks loose we'd find a hole leadin' somewhar."

"As there are no reds with their noses hangin' over the top of the well, I can try another match stick, I think; then we can take another look at those rocks."

The light showed that the rocks, though set in without cement or mortar, were closely wedged.

"Still," said Pawnee, "I think we could loosen 'em up if we took time enough."

"'Tain't goin' to pay," urged the borderman; "so, ef we kin, I vote thet we clim'b out and go trailin' round somewhars else. Buffler has dropped outer sight, which is er quare thing; but thar ain't any indication that he dropped into this place."

"It's a mighty blind trail, old Diamond, and I can't help feeling that we are foolish in what we're doing. Likely Cody will show up in good time and we'll find that there hasn't been a thing to cause us worry."

"Still, 'tain't like him."

"That's right; it isn't like him to promise to be back at a certain time and not keep his promise."

He looked at the top of the well again.

"I wonder," he mused, "what became of Cayuse? I suppose he will hang round until we appear. He's safe, don't you think, in that Pueblo costume?"

"Safe so long's thet Pueblo we left tied up outside ain't found. Then I'm figgerin' thar will be fireworks, wi' Cayuse in ther middle, playin' ther part of pinwheel, ef he's found wi' ther ki-yi's blanket round him."

Nomad kicked at the stones set in the wall to see if a jolt would not loosen them.

The result brought him to a sitting posture.
 "Thrashin' tarantulas! Did ye hear thet, Pawnee?
 Sounded like a voice."

"Hello!" Pawnee called softly.

Then the voice came again—the well-known voice of the German:

"Iss dot you, Bawnee?"

"Waugh! Eet is Schnitz!"

"Yes, this is Pawnee. Where are you, baron?"

"I tond't know, but I am some blaces."

"Behind them rocks, by thunder! Now we has got ter paw a way through 'em."

CHAPTER IX.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE BARON.

Let us touch briefly on the adventures of the baron.

Tucked into a rocky hole, after he had been put through the question mill by the masked men, the baron carefully tested the cords which held his hands together.

"I am in some fixin's," he confessed to himself. "Der Schnitzenhauser luck he haf gone oop der spoudt. Fairst I lose der mooel, unt nexdt—"

He continued to test the cords.

"Undt nexdt I am here. I tond't vant to gomblain, but too mooch oof any'ing—"

His hands, straining behind his back, had come in contact with a sharp-edged rock.

"Ach! I vonder oof I couldt do idt?"

Twisting round so that he could bring the cords to bear, he began to saw them across the edge of the rock.

He desisted when a man stepped out of the darkness and flashed a light.

"Ach! Idt iss you?" said the baron.

"You recognize me?"

"Oof you wouldt dake der masks oof your vace, I shouldt pe looking py der hantsome gountenance oof Velvedt Fosder."

Foster dropped down.

"Your eyes are good," he said.

"Mein ears ar-re petter."

"I suppose that Cody has come to this pueblo to capture me?"

"He dit—nodd!"

"Why did he come?"

"Oof he iss here, I tond't know idt; but oof he iss, he haf come to witness der Indian masquerading, der same as I haf. He wrote me dot he iss coming, unt I am to meet him. So far I haf nodd. He dit nodd know dot you vos here."

"That's the truth?"

"So he'llup me, yack rappit!"

"I hope he isn't here to get after me—both for his own sake, as well as for my own, for I'm not ready to kill him yet."

"You haf daken der contract?"

"I have."

"Idt iss a leeg vum."

"Well, no matter about that. I don't want him killed in a mix-up with the Pueblos; when he goes under I want to be by and see that he gets what the Navahos gave me, and more of it."

"Oof you vill gidt me oudt oof here, I vill sbeak mit Cody unt dell him your vishes."

"You ain't afraid," snarled Foster, who was himself a coward, "because you don't know what is coming to you!"

"I haf too mooch oof a curiosidty to be afraidt. Vot iss der meanness oof der masks?"

All these fellows you saw are simply going to mix in the Indian masquerade. That's what you came here for in that red-devil costume, isn't it? They think it will be fun."

"Unt you?"

"Same here; I'm a mighty humorous fellow, get me out of here!" He arose to go. "It's honest, is it, that Cody didn't come here for me—didn't even know that I was here?"

"So longk as I gain notting py lying, I can sbeak der troot; Cody dit nodd know dot you vos here, unt idt iss der obinion oof me dot he iss sdill nodd knowing idt."

Oof you vill gedt me oudt oof dhis fixin's, I bromise you dot he vill go away, too, unt make no troublesomeness mit you. Vot you say?"

Foster stopped, as if to consider this proposition.

"It's a promise you couldn't carry out," he said; "and, anyway, I've got other fish to fry right now, and I couldn't afford to kick the fat in the fire by mixing in here. You are not my prisoner, you see."

He shuffled off into the darkness, and the baron resumed his attack on the cords.

Not long afterward he saw lights flashing and figures prowling about. The scoundrels who were after the turquoise treasure had broken into some underground rooms, apparently storerooms, and were examining them. They wore no masks now.

"Only when I am loogking, unt dhey sbeak mit me, dhey haf der masks on. Fosder he iss mit 'em. Oof I couldt gidt me vord now to Cody, idt wouldt be some skinches; ve couldt rake dose willains in yoost like a fish nedt."

He felt a strand of cord give.

"She iss coming."

A young Indian appeared in the midst of the men, and spoke to Foster.

"Yiminy Ghristmas! He iss dressed oop like der Bueplo, but he iss Fosder's Inchun. Unt now," he muttered, after a prolonged stare, "I discover me sometings; he iss der wery Inchun vot sdole mein mooel. Ach, mein Toofer; I am vondher vot iss habben py you now?"

When the young Indian brought to Foster a blanket roll, and spread it out, displaying its contents, the baron's eyes glistened and he stared harder than ever; for he saw there the clothing he had left in the piñon grove. Foster's Indian, Feather Foot, had abstracted it from the room in which, temporarily, it had been left by Buffalo Bill; a loss, unexplained at the time to the scout, but which has been already mentioned.

The baron cut away again at the cords which held his wrists.

After a short talk with Foster, which the baron could not hear, the Indian disappeared, with the clothing rolled in the blanket.

"Fairst you see idt, unt dhen idt iss gone like der vlowers oof der peautiful sbringdime unt Toofer. Vot iss nexdt?"

The next was that the baron cut through the cords on his wrists, and freed his hands.

"I haf been here sixdeen hours, py der feelings." He worked his fingers and stretched out his arms; they were stiff and cramped. "Budt oof I gan findt der vay oudt sixdeen minudes vill be der longkest dot dis blace vill holdt me. Now, vor der yoomp; unt may der fairst man oudt vin der race."

He was busy at the cords on his ankles, as he muttered, running a vague plan through his mind:

"I haf coom here py der vell down. Oof I gan reach idt, I vill gidt me oudt by der vell oop. Meppysso I can findt Toofer. I bedt you dot rascal he iss eadting grasses unt nodd t'inking apoudt me at all."

The baron's success, after freeing himself, seemed remarkable, even though he was used to remarkable happenings.

He proved straight off that he was the lucky card in Buffalo Bill's pack by blundering on the blanket roll, as soon as he had crept into the excavated passage leading to the well.

Feather Foot had put it there, after showing it to Velvet Foster.

The baron fairly hugged the roll to his bosom, as soon as he knew what it was.

"Mein clo'dings! Whoob! Who wouldt haf guessed idt? Der habbiness of Schnitzenhauser when he sdrikes der luckiness oof—"

His bubbling delight tangled his utterance, and he was out of breath. A scramble through the darkness of a tunnel, making speed, yet maintaining silence, had tried his strength.

The baron wanted to change into his own clothing, but he dared not take the time; so, dragging the blanket roll, he went on, moving with great stealth.

"Oof I meedt somepoty, a foodt race iss imbossible; so

idt vill be a fight. Unt oof I am vollered? Vale, a mudt durtle could run py now fasdter as me."

But the turquoise hunters were so busy at the moment with certain plans they were maturing that Schnitzenhauser was being neglected, if not forgotten; and in due season, after a tiresome and slow scramble, he reached the blocked end of the tunnel, where it opened on the well.

Here he was thrown into a panic by the firing of guns close by, and a succession of Indian yells. But he lay close, waiting.

At last he heard a voice that had a wonderfully familiar sound. Then he heard another.

"Meppysso I am vonce more sweetly treaming," muttered the baron. "Aber I am, I hobe dot nopodty vill vake me. Unt meppysso from der fairst idt has been a tream. Oof so-o, I am py now ackwainted mit der nighdmares; unt I tond't like her. Ach! Idt iss a funny pitzness, I bedt you!"

He wiped the sweat from his streaming face.

Hearing the voices again, he spoke; and was answered by Pawnee Bill and old Nomad.

CHAPTER X.

PAWNEE DISAPPEARS.

As soon as Schnitzenhauser knew that the borderman and Pawnee Bill were in the dry well, he was able to render invaluable assistance in removing the rocks with which the end of the tunnel had been blocked.

Less than five minutes' work opened the hole so that he could thrust his rotund body through.

"Shakes!" he whispered, putting out both hands, which were clasped immediately. "Vhen shall ve t'ree meedt again?"

"I hope in a better place than this," said Nomad. "Soon's ye git breath ye kin string us yer nanny goat about ther details o' how we find ye in hyer; but, fust, has yer seen Buffler?"

"Iss he here?"

"Thet's what I'm askin'."

"Oof he iss, he aind't seen me. Budt——"

"Waal?"

"Ve petter stick dese sdone pack py der blaces vot dhey haf come oudt oof yoost as kvick as bossiple. Oddervise, der punch oof willains in dhere vill gidt us, like der goplins."

"Ye ain't explained thet—how ye come to be in thar?"

"Ve petter gidt oudt oof here fairst, I bedt you."

"We cain't go through thar, I reckon, in safety."

"Nodt on your lifes; more as a dozen willains ar-re in dhere, mit listls unt knives, unt marks by dheir faces on; I am tiedt py dhem, unt I gidt me loose; unt——"

"Take time ter draw breath, Schnitz; ye're talkin' yer-self black in ther face. Thet devil what come down in hyar been skeerin' ye, too?"

"Vot?"

"Thet red devil what they Injuns has been torkin' erbout all the endurin' night; they say one come down hyar, and I ask, has ye seen him?"

"Me? I am him."

"Waal, I ain't fishin' fer whales; an' seems ter me 'tain't no time fer jokes. Buffler has disappeared; an' we has come down hyar lookin' fer him. You crawls out of a hole, and remarks that back in it thar aire a heap o' read-agent critters bristlin' with knives an' sich; an' when I goes ter makin' earnest inkwories you starts in ter string me. Cut et out, Schnitz, an' git down to brass tacks."

"Vell, I am him."

"You're what?"

"I am der tuyful."

"Waugh! How does yer make thet out? This ain't no time fer er joke."

"Sdrike some lighdts unt see."

Pawnee Bill struck a match, and held it up cautiously.

"Wow!" Nomad gulped, falling back. "Schnitz, ye shere look et! What ye doin' in gyarments like them?"

"Vhen ve gidt oudt oof here I vill make me der ex-splanation; yoost now, ve better gidt us a mote on."

"I'm thinking, baron," said Pawnee, as he put out the match, "that we're not going to get out of here safely

unless you can pilot us out through this passage. You say it is filled with armed men."

"So ye might's well sling yer explanation right hyar," Nomad invited. "We has time. Thar's a wheen o' crazy Pueblos on top o' us, watchin' ther mouth o' ther well. Did ye hear ther shootin'?"

"Did I? Idt vos like her sharge oof der Lighdt Pri-gade."

"They war tryin' ter kill ther devil."

"Ach! Dot iss me."

"They didn't figger thet et war a man, though, Schnitz; but thought et war a sperit. You know erbout whiski-zoos; waal, I reckons, ther ideas war about like thet."

"Tell us what you know, baron," urged Pawnee; "and remember that we are in the dark about everything nearly."

"Yes, thet's right; lead out yer nanny goat."

The "nanny goat" that Schnitzenhauser led forth was a wonderful one, to his listeners.

He began with his experiences in the piñon grove, and the loss of Toofer; then told of his fall into the abandoned well, and the things that had followed. As he had overheard much, and had been enlightened by the questions hurled at him by the masked men and by Foster, he had a pretty accurate sort of information to impart.

"Things have been happening fast under this old rook-ery," said Pawnee, when the baron stopped, out of breath. "The game those fellows are running will have to be blocked. Perhaps there isn't any turquoise treasure; but in what they're doing they're as guilty as if there was."

"But, fust off, we've got to locate Buffler. Ye don't reckon, baron, thet he could be in thar?"

"Oof so-o, he is being heldt pack in some hole, der same as I vos," the baron declared.

"Thar aire a good many rooms in thar?"

"I tond't know dot. But dhere are some rooms vot seems to me vos oldt sdorerooms, not used now by der Inchuns; indo dhose rooms dhey haf broken, unt dhey ar-re searching vor der turquoises."

"An' Foster is with 'em, thicker'n thieves? Thet is fer me as big a s'prise as any; fer we had heard ther Navahos wiped him off ther map. But et's hard ter kill ther likes o' Velvet Foster; an' we might er knowed they didn't."

"I haf toldt you all vot I know now," said the baron; "unt I t'ink me, vwhile you are unraveling oudt oof idt der skinks, I vill yoost change clod'ings; dhis tuyful suidt he iss made me troubles enough."

Pawnee was considering the situation.

"Not just yet," he urged.

"What ye up to now?" asked Nomad.

"Nothing about that; but I'm going into this tunnel for a look round. You stay here with Schnitz, unless I whoop up for help."

"Idt iss a dangerousness."

"It's perilous to be alive, baron; yet we go right on breathing. Cody may be in there, a prisoner, even though you didn't see him; I'm going to see if I can find out."

The brave fellow slipped away through the darkness, almost without a sound.

"We come over hyar ter have some fun, an' we ain't havin' et fer er cent," Nomad grumbled.

"Der same py me. I imachine I can cut a dashes mit der tuyful gostume. Yaw; I dit—nit!"

"Ever' cup o' joy has been mixed with a stick dipped in pizen," Nomad philosophized. "I has allus noticed et. You've done ther same."

"Yaw, sure. I rememper der times vhen I gidt me marriedt; unt der fairst morning oof der honeymoons my wife she hit me mit der rolling lin. Der next morn-ing idt vas a pucket oof vater on my headt. Der next idt vos a ylatirons. Unt der nexdt veek idt iss a tivorcees. Habbiness iss a pird oof baradise vot you gatch py der tail unt all der fedders iss pull oudt. Yaw."

They sat in silence after that, awaiting the return of Pawnee Bill.

Overhead, now and then, they heard the voices of Indians; seeming to show that the top of the well into which the devil had dropped was still being watched by the Pueblos.

"Pawnee Bill is gone a long time," Nomad grumbled,

at last. "Fust off you kicks out, an' we don't know what has become o' ye. Then Buffler goes ter find ye; and he don't reeport. And now, seems like it's Pawnee."

"It began to seem even more like it, when nearly an hour passed over their heads without bringing the return of Pawnee Bill."

"Baron, when yer started out playin' ther devil, ye shore done et," the old borderman growled. "Ef't hadn't been fer thet, things'd gone straight, an' we'd been enj'yn' ourselves, 'stid o' this."

"Dot makes me rub der furs oof der cat der wrongk way," the baron returned. "Dit I pudt dhose willains py der bueplo under? Dit I pudt Fosder py der bueplo in? Nix. Vot dit I do? Notting."

"Ye started ther rookus. Buffler went huntin' fer ye, an' got inter trouble. An' now Pawnee has gone huntin' fer Buffler, an' he's got inter trouble. Ef I go huntin' fer Pawnee—"

"Vell?"

"I won't never come back. Et's in ther air."

"Vhy tond't you say idt iss vhis kizoosicks?" snapped the baron, who did not like to be thus charged.

"Waal, I don't know but et is."

"You are vorse as a Incluns. I vill grawl me pack by der insite oof a minute."

"Waal, ye won't; ef anybody goes in, lookin' fer Pawnee, et is shore goin' to be myself."

"Tidn't I come oudt? You saidt you wouldn't come oudt."

"Mebbyso I won't; but, anyhow, hyar goes. You stay hyar. Ef wust comes, we has got ter have somebody ter kerry ther news."

"Who iss idt to pe carriedit to? Oof you are a gone-ness, dherr iss nopoty left budt Liddle Cayuse."

"An' maybe he ain't; he kited, an' we don't know what has become of him. Waal, hyar goes."

But when Nomad crept through into the tunnel, he came scrambling back much faster than he had gone.

"Waugh!" he breathed, leveling his revolver at the hole and pulling trigger. "They're layin' fer us thar—I heard 'em breathin'."

"Meppysso you are shoodting at Bawnee."

"He wouldn't lay thar breathin' like er groundhog in et's sleep; he'd sing out ter me. An' hyar's ther proof; they're comin'."

"Idt iss der vorst yedt."

"I reckon," snapped the borderman, whirling round, "I'd better save my ammunition fer ther Injuns we'll be buttin' into, ef we git to the top ever. Swarm up, baron."

He began to climb, with the agility of a boy.

Schnitzenhauser swung a stone into the mouth of the tunnel, where he heard men scrambling to get through; then began to climb after the borderman.

He was clinging to his blanket roll of clothing.

Nomad's shot had drawn a number of Pueblos, who rushed at him with threatening cries when he rolled out of the hole; but they fell back when the red-devil form of the baron popped out, and raced off as fast as their legs would carry them.

Apparently the men who had been in the tunnel had gained the bottom of the well; exclamations and execrations could be heard there; but the borderman and the baron did not stop for a close investigation.

"Now we fly," said Nomad, pointing himself at the opening in the wall.

If he had been a steam engine, he might have gone faster, but it is doubtful. Though the panting German could not keep up with him, both were outside the pueblo wall before the scared Indians could gather their wits and make a movement.

Beyond the wall they stopped, and looked back through the opening.

"Nothin' doin'," Nomad reported, speaking with difficulty because of his heavy breathing.

"Der tuyful gostume he iss make goot yedt," said the baron; "der running vot iss done vhen dhey seen me, idt iss a sighdts."

"Ef only we'd had Buffler and Pawnee with us at that identical time, an' we could all be out hyar now!" moaned Nomad.

"Vot iss idt to do?"

"Wisht I could say, baron; thar aire some things too much fer me, an' this seems ter be one."

"Vot iss idt to do?"

"Ve might ride to Santa Fe and gidt helps, unt pull der oldt bueplo down on dop oof idtsellef."

"An Buffler an' Pawnee would be dead, an' ther treasure chamber looted, an' a whole lot o' other unpleasantness took place before we was halfway thar; et's plum' a long road ter Santy Fee, baron."

"Vale, you say sometings. I am oop some sdumps."

"I'm up a dozen an' plenty more stumps ter climb. Wonder whar thet Piute is? He kin help a lot, when he wants ter."

He looked at the baron, who was plainly visible in the starlight in his red-devil costume.

"Jest lookin' at ye in thet rig should suggest suthin', but et don't seem ter. But, say, these Pueblos ought ter be plum' friendly, gin'rally speakin'. Ef you snake sheds out o' thet, an' inter yer own clo'es, an' ye goes straight ter ther headman an' slings ther truth ter him, mebbysso he'll have sense ernough ter believe us, an' help."

The baron struck his breast a thump of approval.

"Idt iss goot. Oof dherr iss some dresure, dhey vill know idt."

"An' they won't be willin' fer that gang of thieves that's down under the pueblo to lay their dirty paws on et. Thet's clear sailin', ain't et? As many Pueblos as thar is hyer could lick thet gang out o' their boots. An' ef Buffler an' Pawnee is pris'ners down thar, they'd be rescued."

"Der blan sdrikes me in der faces," the baron declared. "Ve vill do idt."

CHAPTER XI.

FOSTER'S PLAN.

Recent unhappy experiences had so fed Velvet Foster's fear of Buffalo Bill that it had grown into a terror.

He had now communicated it to the scoundrels, who, burrowing under the pueblo walls, were searching for the turquoise treasure.

They had broken into a number of old storehouses, where, in times of plenty, the overflow of the corn harvest was stored; but they had uncovered nothing of more value than a lot of broken pottery.

While they were thus engaged, working in perfect security so far as the Pueblos were concerned, for the latter were absorbed in their annual scenes of religious and tribal festivity, the escape of the baron, out of the hole into which he had been flung, was brought to their attention.

As they had blocked the end of the tunnel at the well, they did not think he could have got out there readily; still, that was the first place they visited.

There they were fired on by Nomad, as has been shown; and when, in spite of it, they tried to scramble through into the well and seize the German, he and his companion escaped at the top.

Returning in some bewilderment to the broken chambers where they had been at the time the baron's escape was discovered, they talked it over.

"There was two of them," said the leader. "One was this Dutchman. But who was the other?"

"Buffalo Bill, you may be sure," declared Foster.

In the light of the lantern, it could be seen that his face had become white; the red of the scourge marks showing plainly by contrast.

"You can see the daring of the man," he urged; "while we were working round here, he crept in right past us, found his Dutchman, cut him loose, and got out with him. Do you need anything more to show his character?"

The masks, discarded as they worked, had not been resumed.

Bill Jenkins, as Foster's old friend, backed him up.

"He's right, boys. Git Cody started, and he's a terror."

"The thing he will do now," said Foster, "seems to me plain enough. He'll go to the Pueblos and tell them what's going on down here. Then they'll block all the exits, set men to guard them, and we're trapped."

"Let's give that treasure the go-by," said Jenkins. "We ain't findin' it fast, and maybe that Pueblo lied when he told about it; mebbysso there ain't none here at all. If so, we're reskin' our lives down hyer fer nothin'."

Though frightened, the larger number were not ready to abandon the treasure hunt.

"We've got our guns," said the leader. "Why can't we station a guard at the hole we cut in here, and hold that? We can do it."

"With Buffalo Bill maybe out there?" said Foster.

"Think up a better plan, then," was snarled at him.

Foster thought of one immediately, that seemed to him promising.

"The thing to do," he said, "is to queer Cody with the Pueblos. I worked a similar game with the Navahos. I told you about it; how I went into the Navaho village, made 'em think I was Buffalo Bill, and mixed for him a mighty bad trail, when he follered me."

"Who come out worst at the end, though?" was demanded of him.

"I've got to say that I did," Foster confessed.

The thought began to cool his enthusiasm.

"Well, outline yer plan."

"Something like that," said Foster. "I told you that the Navahos gave me back the clothes I had on when I went there; they were a suit, with hat and boots and all, for my Buffalo Bill make-up; and all the clothes I had there. I had them in a roll, and shielded myself with them from the cactus thongs; otherwise, I doubt if I could have pulled through."

"As soon as I was able to dress myself and walk, I put them on out in the desert, and I wore them until I got others; a thing I accomplished by holding up a man I happened on, and taking his, with his weapons."

"After that I came here. But I've told you that. The point is, I brought those Buffalo Bill clothes here with me."

"And can put your hands on them?"

"I think I can without any trouble."

"Well, what's the game?"

"My idea is to appear when Buffalo Bill isn't to be seen by the Pueblos, and run amuck among them; or do something that will make them so infuriated against him that they will want to pull him to pieces as soon as they see him."

"Don't you think that would put the kibosh on anything he tried to do?" he urged. "If he tried to tell them of you fellows down here, and this treasure hunt, they wouldn't believe him; wouldn't even give him a chance to tell about it."

"You're creditin' him with more knowledge than he's likely to have."

"No, I'm not," declared Foster. "He was in here—right in here!—and got that Dutchman out right under our noses. Do you think he did that without spotting us, and seeing just what we're doing; and wouldn't his Dutchman be able to tell him anything that he had not understood? Think it over; you'll see that I'm right."

"That's correct," said Jenkins, backing him again.

"Keep that hole out there open," said Foster, "with a good guard holding it. Then go on with your search. If the Pueblos discover you, fire on them, and be ready to bolt for the open. I'll get that suit of Buffalo Bill clothing, and play my game."

When the conference was over he called up Feather Foot, who appeared in his Pueblo clothing.

"You know where that room is—the one I took you into?" said Foster. "I want you to go there and bring from it the Buffalo Bill clothing you will find in it; the stuff is covered up in one corner of the room. Smooth it out, for it will be wrinkled. And get it to me here as soon as you can."

Feather Foot heard him in silence.

"Where um Buffalo Bill?" he asked.

"He was in here a while ago, and got his Dutchman loose, and got out with him."

"Him Pawnee," said Feather Foot.

"How do you know that?" said Foster, again startled. "Did you see him?"

"Pawnee in here, ketch um Feather Foot?"

"Say that again," requested Foster, his eyes suddenly staring.

"You tell Feather Foot to look um round, mebbysso find turquoise treasure."

"That's what I said, and you started off."

"Me make um big hunt. Bimeby me come back; then —whoosh!—Pawnee ketch um Feather Foot; choke um Feather Foot; leave um Feather Foot tied."

He held up some twisted and knotted cords.

"He tied you up; and you slipped out of them?"

"Ai. No can tie Feather Foot for keep."

"Why didn't you make a noise, or call out?"

"Much heap 'fraid Pawnee," Feather Foot confessed. "Pawnee make um Feather Foot mebbysso dead Injun."

Velvet Foster, coward at heart, stood by the wall, reclining. The candle he had carried, which he had stuck in a niche of the wall, guttered and glowed redly, and made his face a caricature, in his fright.

"I guess you'd better show me where this happened," he said; "that is, if you're sure Pawnee Bill isn't there now."

"No there now," said Feather Foot, and started off.

In one of the chambers which had been opened that night, not far from the spot in which they had talked, Feather Foot stopped.

"Here," he said.

Foster looked about, staring into the shadows.

"He jumped on you in here?" he asked.

"Ai."

"When he left you, which way did he go?"

"That way," said Feather Foot, pointing.

"It leads right toward where our men are now working!" Foster gulped. "I don't like this."

He turned back.

"Keep this to yourself," he said. "I'll mention it if it's needed. The fellows are scared now, and they'd bolt."

He retreated, still staring into the shadows, hand on revolver.

"Pawnee Bill and Cody are both down here, more than likely. I don't know but I'd better scud back to that upper room and burrow like a rat, instead of fooling round down here. I'll think it over. Ten to one there is no turquoise treasure."

A troubling thought struck him.

"That would do no good, after he has spotted me, and knows that I am here; he'd tear down the very walls, but he would find me."

He mused on it, while still he asked questions of Feather Foot.

"I don't think Buffalo Bill has gone to the Pueblos yet; and that means that I've got to move, if I do anything."

He turned to Feather Foot.

"Hustle for that clothing I told you about," he commanded. "Be careful, too, that some of the Pueblos don't discover that you aren't one of them; it would make trouble for both of us. But you're slick, Feather Foot," he commended.

Feather Foot slid away.

Bill Jenkins and the gang leader came in sight.

"If we get the Pueblos aroused against Buffalo Bill," Foster said to them, "it will keep him from making any move against us, no matter how much he knows about our plans. So, what would hinder us from rooting round all we pleased and grabbing everything of value we found?"

"We had figgered we'd do our work while the fiesta was on," was the answer. "Get a Pueblo goin' it in a fiesta, an' he don't know nothin' else; ye could steal the blanket off his shoulders. But we've hit an idee, and come to suggest it. Kin your Injun sling Pueblo talk?"

"I'm sorry to say he can't."

"He couldn't do it, then. We thought mebbysso he could mix in with 'em, and find out whar the turquoise treasure is; we ain't findin' it swift."

CHAPTER XII.

BUFFALO BILL'S PREPAREDNESS.

The baron having shifted into his own clothing, Le and Nomad had gone in search of Nate Hoskins, who was still waiting, out beyond the pueblo walls.

"Them turquoise thieves has shore got their narve with 'em," said Hoskins, "ter go gopherin' right under the pueblo itself."

"Yoost der same nerfe as any odder t'iefs," said the baron; "tond't dhey dunnel under pank puildings, unt blow oop der pank safes, unt der like oof dot? Idt iss me vot aind't got no nerfe mit no veapons eeny more; dhey vos mit dthese clod'ings, unt now dhey aind't."

"I kin lend ye a revolver, ef thet's what yer cryin' erbout," said Nomad.

"An' that spike in the devil's tail would make a handy knife," commented Hoskins.

They were moving on the pueblo wall again, determined to do something, when a form slid out of the darkness and came toward them.

"Little Cayuse," said Nomad, recognizing the lithe form in spite of the darkness and the Pueblo attire.

The Piute brought news of Buffalo Bill.

"Pa-e-has-ka say find um Nomad, find um baron, find um Hoskins."

"Then he is right side up with care. Halleluyer!"

"Pa-e-has-ka plenty top side; Pawnee him, too."

"Waugh! Ye've seen both o' them?"

"You haf seen 'em since der lasdt dime?" queried the baron. "A vhole ago Pawnee he vos py der under site oof der bueplo in."

"Buefler had disappeared, ye know; and Pawnee had gone huntin' fer him, an' he didn't come back. Ther baron means, has ye seen 'em sense thet happened?"

"See 'em plenty late," said the Piute; "say you come by me pronto."

"Whar aire they?"

"Inside pueblo."

"Lead on, then, and hear us shake our war toggery, fol-lerin' you."

The Piute led them swiftly through the broken place in the wall, then piloted them across a dark court into another, that was brightly lighted with guttering candles.

In this court were a dozen Pueblos, surrounding Pawnee and Buffalo Bill, a most surprising sight to the friends of the latter.

"Halleluyer!" Nomad panted. "Buefler ferever!"

"Don't omit me, old Diamond," laughed Pawnee, "when you're shouting your pæans; I'm right here, too."

"Ain't I seein' ye, though I can't believe et! However did this come round? I'm recklectin' well enough thet ye burrowed after Buefler, though ye didn't know ef he war thar, an' ye didn't come back. Then, when me an' ther baron tried ter gopher along, too, them thieves under ther pueblo come fer us, an' we hed ter slide. Then hyer comes Little Cayuse out to us beyond ther walls, and says—"

"We know what he said, and we knew he could find you, for he saw you when you did that sliding act." He looked at the baron. "Schnitz, where is that devil rig; I hope you didn't leave it outside?"

The baron swung the blanket roll forward.

"I got tired yearing idt on der outside oof me, unt so now I am yearing idt in mein handts."

Buffalo Bill had been conferring with some of the headmen, apparently arguing with them; his motions and gestures indicated it.

Now he turned to his friends.

"I didn't come back to tell you what I had discovered," he explained, "for various reasons; the chief of them was that when I got ready the tunnel leading to the hole in the well was filled with the turquoise thieves. So I hunted for another way out, and was a long time about it."

"I haven't time to explain everything, and it isn't necessary. But while I was down there I fell in with Pawnee, who had come looking for me."

"Then Pawnee found ye, 'stead o' losin' hisself?"

"Old Diamond, you can't lose me, and I did," said Pawnee airily; "Cody doesn't like to acknowledge that he was lost, and I discovered him, so he explains it by saying that he fell in with me."

Buffalo Bill laughed.

"We found each other, and embraced like long-lost brothers."

"Then I piloted him back," said Pawnee, "to the place where I had left Foster's Indian hog-tied, and the rascal

was gone. So we concluded not to try the well again, but to go out by a passage that Cody had located."

"To make a long story short," added the scout, "we got into the upper rooms, where we connected promptly with the headman of the village, and told him about the thieves burrowing down there to get at the turquoises. That stirred him, and he called some more of the chief men together. Then we hustled Little Cayuse out to get you. Is that clear? If it is, we'll get right down to business."

"Cl'ar ernough, 'cept ther Piute," said Nomad, tenacious as to particulars; "he war among ther lost an' missin', too."

"He wasn't lost nor missing, but was waiting round, playing Pueblo, and he came to us promptly, finding out what was up as soon as the headman got his runners in motion. By runners I don't mean pedal extremities, Nomad—I throw that in because you have to have every kink in the narrative rope straightened out or you're not satisfied."

"Things not understood su'gests ther work o' whisky-zoos," Nomad mumbled; "an' whatever su'gests whisky-zoos is plum' pizen ter me."

Buffalo Bill beckoned to the headman and his advisers, who had been staring at the white men as if their minds were filled with distrust. He motioned also to the baron.

"Here is the man who played the part of the red devil," was the thing he explained to them by words and motions. They looked in disbelief.

The headman said nothing.

"Sounds like worter gurglin' in ther nozzle of a tea-kittle," Nomad grunted, despising an Indian language he could not fully comprehend.

"He says," explained the scout, "that the baron is not the devil, and I have lied to them. Baron, it is up to you."

"Vot?"

"You've got an order to shuck your clothing," laughed Pawnee, "and do the red-devil act again for their benefit; then perhaps they will believe. That's why I said I hoped you had the goods with you."

"I haf him here," said the baron.

Throwing the roll to the floor, he opened it and displayed the red-devil costume. The next minute he was shifting into it. Suddenly he stopped and hammered against the pocket of his undershirt.

"Vhen I haf me anyt'ing vot I vant to keeb, I blace idt in der bocket oof dhis," he said; "unt to-night idt iss make me a heab oof droples, vor in der bocket here iss der ledder vot Cody he wrote to me saying vill I coom py der bueplo fiesta. Der tellers down ly der under site oof dhis blace dhey found idt. Ach, den I t'ink me dot Schnitzen-hanser he iss a deadt mans."

He went on with his lightning-change act, and stood forth as the red devil the Pueblos had seen disappear into the old well. Even to their skeptical minds it was a convincing exhibition.

"Until now," said Buffalo Bill to his friends—he had been watching the expression on the faces of the Indians—"the headman has been the worst of the doubters; but he has tumbled to the fact, and we're going to have a free hand here, I think."

"Inchuns are kveer stuffings," muttered the baron, as the Pueblos walked round him, surveying him critically. "I bedt you oof I should yoomp unt holler unt svish dhis tail aroundt dhey wouldt pe running again yoost like some rats vot iss chased by der cat."

The headman turned and began to speak to Buffalo Bill.

"He says he is not afraid of a thing like that," the scout interpreted, basing his knowledge as much on the expression of the headman's face as anything else. "He knows what disguising and masquerading is, and if they had not been 'killing the devil' at the time the baron shot into their view they would not have been frightened by him; but it is all right now."

"When ye see that a ghost what skeers ye is nothin' but a shadder on the wall," said Hoskins, "yer courage comes back; that's about the size of it."

"They say, too," the scout still interpreted, "that they're ready to believe the other things I have said, and if the thieves are down there they will kill them."

"That is, if the thieves are willin'," Hoskins amended.

Buffalo Bill got busy again with fingers and voice.

"Keep close to me," he said to Pawnee and the other white men. "When the fighting comes, we'll have to bear the brunt of it; never doubt that."

"Recklect thet Foster's down thar," said Nomad.

"And another rascal in whom I am more interested. You remember Sam Beebe?"

"What killed old man Morgan out at the Double Bar?"

"He's there; likewise Sim Mehaffy, who led the gang that held up the Tucson stage and shot the driver."

"Twarn't no more than a month ago," said the borderman.

"Those are the two men I am anxious to land," said the scout. "Foster we'll rake in, too, while we're about it. That is," he added, by way of verbal caution, "if we can put this through."

"What is ther programmy, Buffler?"

"Just follow me and fight, if there comes fighting."

CHAPTER XIII.

TRAPPING THE TREASURE HUNTERS.

When Pueblo spies had wriggled down into the storerooms held by desperadoes and had wriggled back to the headman with the news that the scoundrels were there, hesitation on the part of the Pueblos ended.

Guards were then stationed to keep the rascals from escaping when the attack on them began.

"From a suspected character," said Pawnee, "Pard Bill has suddenly become leader here. He has directed that a watch shall be set at the mouth of the old well, and another in that artist's shanty through which the desperadoes began their tunnel work, and now there goes another squad of ki-yis hastening off to obey his orders."

"Ter see him go piroutin' round, turning ther wings o' defeat into a helmet o' vict'ry, makes a critter proud ter be his pard, too," declared old Nomad. "I has worked in harness wi' him a good while now, an' et's allus ther way he does."

"Idt iss," warned the baron, "gounting der eggs vhide der shinkers and't in 'em. Before now I haf seen idt. Budt yoost der same dimes, vhide I am saying idt, I am peddting on Cody."

There had been a good deal of delay while preliminary work was going on.

Taking advantage of it, the baron slipped out of his red-devil costume into his ordinary clothing.

"Idt makes me veel petter as goot," he urged. "Dot redt-tuyful gostume he iss pring me nottings but padt lucks."

"Good luck, ye mean," Nomad corrected. "Fer, ye see, we ve had't fell inter ther well——"

"Yaw, I know vot iss your meanness. I wouldn't haf lsd't me Toofer. Unt I couldt haf hadt so mooch funny pitzness mit der Bueplos dot I vouldt be laughing till yedt already. I tond't gan seen der good lucks vot has been coming my way. Pooty nigh I vos being kilt by der wil-lains. Sooch a luckiness tond't abbrecciate me."

More than a hundred aroused and armed Pueblos, led by a dozen of their principal men, made from different directions a stealthy descent on the storerooms under the communal building.

Thar vich the headman and others had denied scornfully and strenuously that the pueblo held a place in which ancient idols were kept in secret, the said idols being girdled and clothed in turquoises, Buffalo Bill and his friends began to think that there was much more than a grain of truth in the story.

"You can see, neearnis," said Pawnee, "that they are now worked to a pitch of fury, since they know it is true that the desperadoes are down there, and unless their religious feelings were stirred it would be hard to so arouse any Pueblo. It's a sure shot that the turquoises and the idols are there."

In spite of their pitch of frenzy, Buffalo Bill pushed on past the Pueblos, on the descending steps at that point, and preceded them.

"If ther ki-yis crowdin' down at the t'other places don't make a noise, now," said Nomad, "an' muss up ther plan, looks like we has got 'em dead to rights."

He stopped short in his tracks, hearing a rumbling noise.

"Thunder an' kerry one! What war thet?"

"That sounded, Nomad, if you ask me," was the reply of Pawnee, "like a house unsettling its foundations."

"I don't reckon," said Hoskins, "that there ol' pueblo is goin' ter fall down on us?"

When they got farther down they encountered a dust cloud.

The Pueblos pressing on them behind pushed them into it.

"What's ter pay, Buffler?" queried Nomad anxiously. "Stand right here, and you'll see a light flashing."

The Pueblos saw it at the same time, and the sight maddened them; the light was that of a torch flaming in a room which the desperadoes had entered by tearing out a door. In its fall the door had carried down a mud-brick column, which accounted for the cloud of dust.

The idol room had been found and opened, and the desperadoes were rifling the clothing of the idols, tearing away strings of turquoises and even the clothing itself.

"Back against the wall!" Buffalo Bill warned.

It came none too soon.

The Pueblos, writhing in rage when they saw the desecration being perpetrated, would no longer await the leading of the white men, but flung themselves down the remaining steps, a maddened and screaming mob.

Hearing them coming, the desperadoes wheeled round.

The voice of Bill Jenkins barked out:

"They've got us!"

"Show 'em that they've caught more'n they can hold," shouted another voice. "Pals, give 'em the lead."

Revolvers flashed and roared; but, though some of the Pueblos in the forefront went down, the others rolled on like a resistless tide, and in a moment a furious hand-to-hand combat was raging.

Fearing that the desperadoes would be massacred, a thing he did not desire, Buffalo Bill, backed by his friends, tried to get down into the boiling mêlée.

They were pushed back and retreated to the steps.

From other rooms and passages Pueblos poured, mad with hate, and threw themselves into the fight.

"Waugh!" rumbled Nomad. "Spittin' tomcats ain't in et."

"You'd like to be in it yerself, I 'low," said Hoskins.

The working of the borderman's face was revealed clearly by the light of a torch stuck in a niche by a Pueblo. A fight was a picnic for old Nomad.

"Waal, I would, old hoss; an' so would you!"

The fight did not last long; it was too furious in its character, and carried on at too close quarters.

When it ended, five of the desperadoes who had burrowed for the turquoise treasure were all that remained alive. Terribly gashed with Pueblo knives, the others lay on the floor.

Buffalo Bill's interference at this time probably saved the lives of the five. He jumped in and ordered the Pueblos to desist in the name of the governor of New Mexico and of the Great Father at Washington.

Scattered over the floor were the strings of turquoises taken from the idols; and the Pueblos, gathering them up, began to restore them, turning temporarily from the prisoners, and even from their own dead, of whom there were at least a dozen.

No doubt they feared vengeance of some kind, if the sacrilegious work were not undone as speedily as possible.

"Yit thar is a padre comes ter this pueblo reg'lar," commented Nomad. "How does thet strike yer?"

"It shows to me," said Nate Hoskins, "that if ye scratch an Injun skin deep you're goin' ter find a savage, call him whate'er ye will. I allus has knowed that these Pueblos carried on queer doin's in their secret estufas, an' some said that it was idol worship. So far as this pueblo goes, hyar is proof."

Prowling round, when he had inspected the captured prisoners, who were held after a time by a Pueblo picked guard, old Nomad looked for the body of Foster among the slain. It did not satisfy him that Mehaffy and Beebe, the murderous road agents wanted by Buffalo Bill, were with the prisoners.

But it was not there.

"A screw slipped somewhar," he admitted. "'Cordin' ter all calc'lations, Velvet Foster ort to be with the dead men, er with the pris'ners; yit he ain't wi' neither."

"Which proves that he got away," said Hoskins.

"Didn't none of 'em git erway," Nomad objected. "He warn't hyar when ther 'tack war made, thet's all."

He reported the fact, already known, to Buffalo Bill.

"Yes, we know it," said Pawnee. "Velvet is a smooth piece of goods."

"An' his Injun ain't hyar," said Nomad.

"Pard Bill thinks they got wind of what was coming and piloted themselves out of the storm center. It looks it, and it would be like Velvet Foster to go without warning the others. The ki-yis are howling because they can't find all the strings of beads the idols were wearing. If they're missing for sure, just say that Foster got off with them and you'll be cutting into the truth."

More than once that afternoon and night the pueblo had buzzed like a hive of angry bees, but now it was worse—the angry buzz had become a roar of grief and rage.

"'Tain't safe fer any white man ter be in hyar," said Nomad; "so et's me fer the outside."

But Buffalo Bill needed him.

Pueblo runners had been dispatched to Santa Fe, bearing messages to the governor, to the militia stationed there, and to the sheriff of the county.

It would be hours before these could be delivered. In the meantime, the captured desperadoes required a competent and courageous guard to prevent fanatical Pueblos from rushing upon them and hacking them to pieces.

Pawnee, as a joke, suggested that all they needed to do was to dress the baron in his red-devil costume and station him in front of the prisoners; but the baron begged to be excused.

So the night ended.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAYUSE'S SILENT SEARCH.

The secret rites and ceremonies of the estufa were probably religious, and for that reason they went on. Yet the races went on, too, the next day, and they were not religious.

In the hidden estufa rites Little Cayuse was much interested. A long time before he had passed through some very thrilling and interesting experiences in a Pueblo estufa.

Another thing in which he was much interested throughout the night, after the capture of the desperadoes, was an attempt he made to locate Feather Foot.

Whenever Velvet Foster played his rôle of "Buffalo Bill" he had Feather Foot with him, and Feather Foot played the part of "Little Cayuse."

Having learned that Feather Foot was now playing Pueblo, Little Cayuse looked for him in that garb, being himself clothed in Pueblo blanket and moccasins taken from the Pueblo captured some time before, but who had been found and released by his friends.

The estufa opened on a flat roof, a round hole being the only apparent entrance. The participants in the estufa ceremonies and dances came leaping across the flat roof and disappeared down the hole into subterranean darkness. They were nearly naked, but wonderfully painted and feathered.

The Piute knew that they went down a ladder and that back in the estufa, or roof of ceremonies, torches were flaring and dancers were whirling. But his previous experiences made him chary of a closer investigation at that time.

When he did not detect Feather Foot in the midst of the now curious Pueblo youths who had ventured near, like himself, Little Cayuse crawfished from the vicinity of the hole and descended from the roof.

For an hour he poked round, peering into holes and corners as if he were a ragpicker seeking odd refuse. He fancied that Feather Foot, being now a fugitive, might be found hiding in some such place.

Having passed from one staircase roof to another, he let himself down once more to the roof over the estufa, and saw before him the round hole, a black spot in the middle of the surrounding slatish gray.

There were more young Pueblos there than before, and from the hole floated the thumping of a drum and Indian chanting.

"Heap big dance," muttered the Piute.

Crawling into the midst of the Pueblo youths, he lay down and listened to the drumbeat and chant, and to the talk that was carried on in subdued tones.

He regretted that Pueblo was an unknown tongue to him, reflecting that if he understood it he might gain interesting information.

By this time Little Cayuse had reached the conviction that Feather Foot had escaped from the pueblo.

A doubt of this came when he noted one of the young fellows lighting a cigarette. There was nothing in the act itself, for others were rolling and smoking cigarettes, but the manner of it was what drew the Piute's attention.

The Piute could not have told in what the difference consisted, but he knew the paper trough was held in a different way, and the tobacco was fingered into it instead of being poured in with a sifting movement, as was the fashion of the others.

When the Piute's keen eyes had caught this by the light from a match flaming in the fingers of another young Indian, he watched closely for the flare of a match in the fingers of the man he now suspected.

When the light came, he was sure the brown face it revealed, half screened by the smoker's cupped hands, was the face of Feather Foot.

Though gratified by his discovery, he was astonished. The boldness of Feather Foot in daring to flare a match into his own face while lying there on the rim of the estufa hole betokened a sense of security or foolhardy recklessness.

For a number of minutes, until Feather Foot arose to go, Little Cayuse lay watching him.

When Feather Foot shuffled away, Little Cayuse slid backward, rose, and followed him.

On a roof lower down, hearing the slide of his pursuer's moccasins, Feather Foot had stopped.

Little Cayuse, coming on and seeing him there, leaped over.

"Who you?" Feather Foot demanded sharply.

"You play um Cayuse—huh! Now you play um Pueblo! This for play Cayuse!"

The Piute swung an Anglo-Saxon blow, one taught him by Nomad, but the clever Indian at whom he aimed it ducked and it went over his head. Then they came together and fell heavily on the hard cement of the roof.

They were fighting like a pair of young wild cats when the noise of it brought a dozen Pueblos upon them.

As they were snaked apart, Feather Foot sprang wildly off the roof to the ground below, a jump of a dozen feet or more, and disappeared.

Little Cayuse was not able to attempt anything so desperate and spectacular, and his captors held him fast.

A stream of guttural questions flowed over his head, and when he did not reply the Pueblos discovered that he was not a Pueblo.

Enraged by this, they began to kick him round the roof, having ringed him in; and it was going hard with the Piute when some Pueblo of authority appeared in their midst.

Ordering them off, he spoke to Little Cayuse, who had backed against the wall and had his knife out. Little Cayuse understood him no more than he had understood the others.

But inspiration came to him.

"Pa-e-has-ka!" he shot at his interrogator.

"Buff'lo Bill!" he added, when the other went without effect.

The interrogator hurled another verbal volley.

"Take me Buff'lo Bill," begged Little Cayuse. "You know um Buff'lo Bill?"

They knew Buffalo Bill, or knew about him; not many hours before, Buffalo Bill had given them information, and led them in a raid against some white desperadoes who were robbing and desecrating the idol room. The desperadoes not killed were now held under guard and were to be taken away to the white man's jail, and the turquoise treasure was safe. They remembered this, though,

if questioned, they would still have denied the existence of an idol room and turquoise ornaments in the pueblo.

The questioner, suspecting at once that this was the young Indian who had been with Buffalo Bill, whom he had not seen but of whom he had heard, ordered him taken before the headman.

Buffalo Bill was in conference with the headman at the time in a room not far off, and into the headman's presence Little Cayuse was conducted.

"Pa-e-has-ka!" he cried.

The great scout swung round, hearing the tramping on the threshold and his Indian name pronounced in that way.

"Little Cayuse!" he said, as the Piute came rolling in, propelled by the Pueblos.

The Piute's knife had been taken from him, and the man behind him waved it aloft to show that the Piute had been captured armed.

"What's up?" the scout asked, looking from Cayuse to the excited Pueblos clamoring at his heels.

"Cayuse ketch um Feather Foot," said the Piute, swelling boastfully, for he was proud of the achievement, though in results it had failed. "Make um heap fight with Feather Foot, then um Pueblos come."

The headman was listening to the charges being ~~scratched~~ by the Pueblos and was looking suspiciously at the Pueblo clothing which the Piute wore.

"This is my Indian," said the scout.

The headman looked at the gesticulating and yammering Pueblos.

"He was fighting with a young Pueblo," he said to the scout.

Buffalo Bill informed him that the Indian with whom the Piute had been fighting was not a Pueblo, though he wore Pueblo clothing, but was a young thief who was the follower of Velvet Foster.

"But here is where we strike the rocky road to Dullin," he said, speaking to himself as well as to Little Cayuse; "they don't seem to know anything about Velvet Foster, though from talk overheard by the baron we expected they would know all about him."

The headman was gabbling and gesturing again.

"They say," said the scout to Little Cayuse, "that no white man with an Indian follower has been in the pueblo; therefore, they argue, you could not have been fighting with such an Indian, and it is clear as glass, you see, after that, that you have told a lie."

Little Cayuse shifted uneasily.

"No make um lie!" he expostulated.

"Certainly not; but that is what they think. If you could have held Feather Foot!"

He turned again to the sputtering headman.

"He says," he informed the Piute, "produce the young Indian who is not a Pueblo and they will believe you. How is that; when they wouldn't let you hold him after you had mixed with him? But it will give you liberty to explore round, and perhaps you can nab him again."

He began tongue-and-finger exercise again, for the benefit of the headman.

"I'm preparing to look through the pueblo myself," he said to the Piute, "so far as they will permit, for I want to lay my hands on Foster. While I'm doing it, you can be looking for Feather Foot. I've an idea that if we find them our trails will point to the same place and they will be found together."

The Pueblos who had brought Little Cayuse to the headman did not like the turn of events when the release of the Piute was ordered by him.

But it had one result:

It elevated, in their estimation, the influence of Pa-e-has-ka.

CHAPTER XV.

DESPERATE FOSTER.

The swiftness with which Buffalo Bill cut the ground from under the plans of Velvet Foster terrified that rascal to the extreme.

At the moment when he was preparing to run amuck through the Pueblos in his Buffalo Bill disguise, for the purpose of turning the Indians in a crazy frenzy against the great scout, the latter had led them upon the desperado's hiding the idol room.

So at one blow Foster's plan was shattered, the Pueblos had become Buffalo Bill's friends, and Foster's desperado companions were overthrown.

Learning of it, Foster fled as fast as his shaking legs could carry him to the room in which he had lived since entering the pueblo.

There he divested himself of his Buffalo Bill clothing and slipped into the garments he had worn when he came to the place. The disguise he concealed in a blanket and tucked it out of sight beneath his cot.

He was badly frightened, and by the time he was through he was panting and bathed in perspiration.

Dropping to the ledge of the deep window which gave him his one outlook from the room, he sucked in the cool air.

"I don't think they can find me here," he assured himself, "but if they do I'll make a fight and then drop from this window and make a run for it."

The revolvers he had worn with the Buffalo Bill disguise he took up and examined carefully.

"Chambers loaded—everything all right. If they crowd me—"

He began to consider his situation, trying to draw hope and comfort from it.

"The Pueblos never saw me in that suit of clothing before—don't know that I have it; so it's a safe ten-to-one shot that they didn't recognize me when they saw me a while ago. Cody will tell them I am Velvet Foster. That will only mix them, for they don't know me by that name. I am the gentleman and scholar who is writing the book which is to make this village known to all the world. The headman has seen the picture I am to put into it as his; he thinks it looks like him. The book is going to be illustrated with pictures of the principal men. So I am the hot tamale they like, and they won't throw me down without something more than Cody's word."

When he had thus consoled himself and felt his personal danger less, he took time to consider the situation from another angle, and spent the next half hour or so in vituperating the luck that had tossed away the turquoise treasure.

"What a fool I've been, too—from the first! Here I've spent days and days, and that load of turquoises right under my very nose! I didn't even look round to investigate."

It stung him to know that, though a rumor of the turquoise treasure had come to him more than once, he had turned it down as idle talk. He felt as the burglar does who takes away a five-dollar finger ring and discovers later that he had overlooked a sunburst of diamonds.

After the shouting and the tumult, Foster's sense of security increased.

"I'll hive up here," he said, "and when Buffalo Bill and his crew go away, I'll get out and leave the country."

But his fears came again, and his mood changed, when Feather Foot flew into the little room with his story of the fight with Little Cayuse.

"Sit down there!" commanded Foster, when Feather Foot had stammered through his report. "And let me get the straight of this. Cody's Indian trailed you out?"

"One time—two time me see um," said Feather Foot, "before he come by estufa."

"He follered you first to the estufa?"

"Wuh."

Feather Foot tried to make clear his belief that Little Cayuse had dogged him some time before that. Relying on his Pueblo clothing, and also because he wanted to see if it were true, Feather Foot said he had not tried to shake off the Piute. For the same reason, to test Little Cayuse, he had lighted a cigarette as he lay by the estufa opening; then had risen and walked off slowly.

"Then me know it true," he explained. "Cayuse foller pronto. Me see um come. So me jump down on lower roof and lay for um."

"And didn't get him!"

"Fight make heap noise," said Feather Foot. "Then Pueblo come. Then pronto for here—me."

He shook his head sadly.

"Cody is hunting for me?" said Foster.

Feather Foot was sure of it.

"Well, the Pueblos haven't turned against me yet, or they'd have been up here. Draw your blanket close, slip out, and look round a bit; then come back and report."

The situation had not changed when Feather Foot came back.

CHAPTER XVI.

FOSTER'S FAILURE.

"Et's too bad thet Buffler couldn't er put the kibosh on Foster."

"He didn't, Nick," said Hoskins; "but don't be a hawg: he got his grippers on two o' ther worst bad men and lawbreakers in the Southwest, and they're on their way to the Santy Fee jail right now, in the hands of men who know how to hang on when they take holt. So I'd advise ye to fergit Foster an' inj'y yerself."

The invitation was timely.

That the Pueblos were enjoying themselves there could be no doubt, in spite of the fight of the night before and the fact that sundry villagers had been wiped out in it.

It may be that the enjoyment was more seeming than real, and that the wild hurly-burly of the foot races and the various contests partook of a religious character; this may well have been so, and could account for the apparent indifference to the dead, if the dances and the fierce contests helped to show thankfulness for the safety of the hidden gods and the turquoise treasure.

Old Nomad walked on to a line of men viewing the foot races. There he joined Paynee, the baron, and Little Cayuse.

"Buffler still piroutin' round, huntin' fer Foster?" he said. "Waal, he might's well quit et."

"How much um bet?" Cayuse yelled at him.

"Thet Buffler's wastin' his time? Son, any bet'd be stealin' yer money."

"Bet um races," said Little Cayuse. "How much?"

He shook some silver pieces in his hands.

Nomad pushed farther into the line and let his eyes wander over the singular scene.

He and his friends were out in front of the big pueblo in the bright sunshine of the late afternoon. The staircase roofs were crowded with Pueblos, and so was the ground below; but a space had been opened between the spectators on the ground and the blank wall, and through that race course some hot foot contests were under way, being run out by the fastest runners of the tribe.

The runners came down the line in splendid style—handsome young fellows, though Indians. They wore almost no clothing, but were barbarously painted. On their unplumed heads bits of cotton and wool had been stuck, giving grotesque effects.

As they passed along, their friends on the roofs threw down upon them loaves and pieces of bread—the Pueblo manner of hurling bouquets—and yelled their encouragement.

"Red or white, human nature is a good deal the same, old Diamond," Pawnee commented. "Wherever you go, a fight or a foot race will get the crowd."

"Bet um races," said Little Cayuse, shaking his money under Pawnee's nose.

"Shoo! Go 'way; I don't want your money."

"Bet um races," said Little Cayuse, passing on.

The man he wanted to back started and came down the line before Cayuse found any takers.

The runner was a favorite of others, as was shown by the manner in which the Pueblos screeched and hurled their bits of bread.

Suddenly Foster put into trial the crazy scheme he had been brooding all day, thinking that if it failed night was close at hand and he could make his escape even though rounded and hunted out of his hiding place.

As the Pueblo runner flashed over the line, Buffalo Bill's double-barreled shot at him from the roof of the adobe structure while the Pueblos were throwing bread.

Instead of bowling over the runner, it struck another man and knocked him from his pins.

For a moment Foster, in his Buffalo Bill clothing, let himself be seen in the midst of the bread throwers on the flat roof; then he jumped backward, and before hands could be stretched out to hold him he was gone.

Velvet Foster's plan to down Buffalo Bill might have carried through—for the Pueblos were thrown into a fury of anger—but for the fact that when he tried it Buffalo Bill was holding a conference with the headman of the village in the presence of some of the principal men; and they thus knew he did not do—could not have done—the thing charged against him.

The scout took occasion to tell the headman again what he had already emphasized—that Foster, one of the men who planned the looting of the treasure, was still concealed in the pueblo.

"There is but one white man here," said the headman. "He is the man who is making the book—a learned white man who would not harm even a grasshopper."

"Take me to his room," said the scout.

They did so.

But Velvet Foster was gone.

THE END.

"Buffalo Bill's Taos Totem; or, Pawnee Bill's Zuni Trail," is the story for the next issue, No. 277. It is a rare, good story of Indian trailing and Indian fighting, and it brings out in the most fascinating way the strange and interesting superstitions and customs of the red men. The stealing of the precious Taos totem from one tribe by the braves of another brings about bunches of trouble for both reds and whites; but the Bills and their pards, especially the baron and old Nomad, take the trail and add several new chapters of history to the many traditions of the famous totem. This number will also contain an installment of Edward C. Taylor's rattling serial, "The Rival Miners," and the News of the World. Out next week, December 29th.

THE RIVAL MINERS;

Or, Ted Strong on the Trail.

By EDWARD C. TAYLOR.

(This interesting story began in NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY No. 269. If you have not read the preceding chapters, get the back numbers which you have missed from your news dealer. If he cannot supply you with them the publishers will do so.)

CHAPTER XVII.

WHERE IS ALFRED ASHFORD?

Three days later Ted Strong came downstairs from his bedroom up at the Black Mountain Ranch and sat down on the porch. He had been in bed for all the three days, suffering from his burns and from the shock. He had been taken in a wagon from the Yellow River up to Black Mountain. The cabins had all been destroyed at Yellow River; and the boys had thought it better to take Ted up to Black Mountain, where he could have the cool breezes of the hills and his own comfortable room.

Ted had fallen senseless after his rescue of Daisy, and when he awoke once more, it was to the agony of countless burns on hands and face and the uneven jolting of the wagon that was conveying him to the ranch house. The pain had been unendurable, and he had fainted once more. A doctor had been sent for from Crook City, and he had administered opiates and dressed the wounds, so that when Ted awoke again he was up at Black Mountain and comparatively comfortable.

Three days later he was able to be about. The ranch house was quiet and deserted, the only person there, besides Ted, being Pomp, the negro cook. Bud Morgan was out on the range with the cowboys, and had been for the last five days, and the other boys were down at Yellow River, busy repairing the damage that had been done by the fire. Ted had heard about the work from Kit Summers, and had also heard that Daisy was safe at home, and that the burns she had received had turned out to be nothing serious.

The mystery of her sudden appearance in the powder house when she should have been back at her home in Crook City was still puzzling Ted, and he was just planning to ride down to Crook City on horseback to make investigations for himself.

One of his arms, which had received the severest burns, was in a sling, and there were also severe burns on his face and hands, but these were healing rapidly, thanks to his good blood and constitution, so that he thought he would have no difficulty in managing a horse.

He had just called to Pomp to get a horse from the paddock near the ranch house, when he saw a figure on horseback approaching across the mesa. It was Kit Summers, and he greeted the young roughrider heartily and handed him a letter. Ted tore open the letter without a word, for he recognized the handwriting as that of Daisy Miller. It ran as follows:

"DEAR TED: For the past two days I have been trying to write to you, and have torn up half a dozen letters. You must think very badly indeed of me, and I want to explain my conduct to you. I can't do it in a letter. I want to beg your pardon for many things and explain. Will you see me, or are you utterly disgusted with me? I am quite well now, and Kit tells me that you are getting better rapidly. If you are in Crook City, will you call on me? Or shall I wait and ride over to see you with father? Yours truly,

DAISY MILLER."

"Saddle up, Pomp," shouted Ted, folding up the note; "Kit and I are going to ride down to Crook City."

Kit smiled, but said nothing, and neither of the young men spoke until they were in the saddle again and riding off across the prairie.

"Something I want to talk to you about," said Kit, "is this fellow Ashford. He's gone clean away, and with him is gone that bag of dust he must have stolen from the stamp mill. I am morally certain that he is the man who set the mill on fire. He was seen sneaking about it that night by some of the men, and I am sure he did the business. Mr. Ashford knows all about it now, for I thought it was time he knew and told him."

"That was right," said Ted slowly.

"I've been talking to Daisy, too," said Kit, "and she has explained some things to me. She came down to the Yellow River that night after Ashford. She thought he was planning some harm against you, and she wanted to warn you. Alfred Ashford is the man who set the mill afire."

"How do you know?"

"Daisy saw him, and started off to find us to spread the alarm. He saw her and tried to catch her. She mistook the powder mill for our eating cabin. The door was open, for Alfred Ashford evidently had a duplicate key for it, and had left it unlocked. She ran in there, and he chased her upstairs and locked her in the front room up there. He evidently had been using some supplies out of the powder house to start the fire."

"That explains Daisy's appearance in the powder house," said Ted, after a long silence. "But it does not explain some other things. It does not explain, for instance, why Ashford should want to set fire to it, or why he should be leagued with Earl Rossiter, as he is, apparently."

The boys talked over this point for a long time as they rode toward the town.

Mr. Ashford had been informed fully as to the suspicions against his brother, and was as much at a loss to explain them as any one else. Ashford had been seen nowhere after the fire, but his brother had hired detectives to trace all his movements before coming to Crook City and try and find some track of his present whereabouts.

At the Eagle Hotel, in Crook City, they met Mr. Ashford. With him was a man dressed in black, with a smooth-shaven face. Ashford introduced him to Ted as a detective—Smoot by name.

"I have been puzzled a good deal by some things about the mine lately," said Ashford, "and I know that you have. You have not said anything to me about them because you thought it might hurt me. But it's all explained now. Mr. Smoot will tell you the whole business."

"It's a rather uncommon case," began Smoot, in a dry,

matter-of-fact tone. "I have discovered that Alfred Ashford is at present in San Francisco, and has been there for the past three months."

"That's impossible," said Kit.

"Not at all," said Smoot. "The man who has been masquerading here as Alfred Ashford is the man I am looking for now on a charge of setting fire to the stamp mill and stealing gold from the Black Mountain Mining Company, as well as obtaining money under false pretenses. His name is James Hendricks, and he has been known to the New York police for some time as Slick Hen. He was no more related to Mr. Ashford than you are."

It took some time for Smoot to convince the two boys of the truth of what he said. He had already convinced Mr. Ashford, but the boys had always thought of Alfred as his brother, and it was hard for them to understand how Mr. Ashford could be fooled into believing that another man was his own brother. They realized, however, that Ashford had never seen his brother before, and that the game which had been played by Slick Hendricks was easier of execution than it sounded.

Smoot had telegraphed to Alfred Ashford, and found that he had been acquainted with Hendricks, having met him in Frisco, and had told him his history, thinking that he was a rancher. Hendricks had introduced himself as a rancher and won the confidence of the young man. Alfred Ashford had been taken ill in San Francisco, and Hendricks had taken advantage of his illness to come to Black Mountain and impersonate him. He had intercepted the letter Alfred had sent to his brother, explaining his delay.

He had been stealing all he could at the Yellow River Mine, for he knew that he must be discovered sooner or later, and he had made an effort to make hay while the sun shone. It seemed likely that he had been bribed to set the stamp mill on fire by Earl Rossiter, Ted's rival, but there was no way of proving this. This explained, of course, the entire dissimilarity that the boys had noticed between the two men they had supposed to be brothers, and cleared up the whole affair.

"I am glad he turned out to be no kin of mine," said Ashford, when the explanation ended, "and I must say that he has fooled us all nicely. But the loss of the gold dust won't break us, and the boys have been hustling so down at the mine that we will be able to resume work there inside of a week."

"There's Daisy Miller with her father across the street, going down to the post office. Suppose we join them? I want to go there," said Kit.

The Millers were delighted to see Ted on his feet again, and insisted on his coming with them to lunch at the hotel. Ted and Kit had left their horses in a shed, and they walked along with the Miller party as far as the post office. Ashford and Mr. Miller walked together, Kit was busy talking to Smoot, the detective, and Ted was left behind with Daisy.

They talked about various subjects for some time, and then Daisy fell into a silence. At length she raised her head, looked Ted full in the face, and spoke.

"I suppose you never bothered your head about me much," she said. "You have so many other things to think of, but I want to explain why I refused to see you or to talk to you when that man Hendricks was here."

"I've been waiting for the explanation," said Ted coldly.

"I know you must think badly of me now."

"Not at all," said Ted. "I have no right to force you to go driving or riding with me, or to see you when you don't want me to. I have no business to complain."

"Don't talk that way."

"It's the most sensible way to talk I know of," said Ted. "I don't see any reason why I shouldn't talk that way."

"I can't stand it," said Daisy. "After all you have done for me—we have been such good friends—I can't stand to hear you speak that way. You know you have the right."

"Have I?" said Ted. "You didn't act as if I had."

"Please don't; but you have a right to scold me. Let me explain. I thought that this Hendricks was Mr. Ash-

ford's brother, and I thought that, as Mr. Ashford had been kind to us all, that I should try to be nice to him, and I did."

"I quite believe that you did," said Ted dryly.

Daisy was just on the verge of tears now, for Ted's cold tone and air of indifference hurt her, but she bit her trembling lower lip and went on bravely:

"I believed what he said when he spoke to me about you. I thought that, of course, he was telling the truth."

Ted's face suddenly changed. He turned toward the girl beside him and looked at her for the first time during their conversation.

"What did he tell you about me?" he asked.

"A whole lot of stuff," said Daisy quickly. "It's hard for me to tell you it all, but I am going to. He told me that you didn't care for me. That you had been thrown into positions where you had seen a great deal of me against your will. He said that you told him that you had to be nice to me out of courtesy, but that you made fun of me behind my back and told him and the other boys that I was in love."

"What!" said Ted. "He told you that? He's a bigger scoundrel than I thought he was. And you believed him?"

"Oh, Ted!" said Daisy, "I tried to. I thought I ought to. I was hurt and bitter. I knew that if I saw you again it would be hard for me not to be the same as ever, but I couldn't be the same, I know. I thought that the best thing I could do would be to keep away from you and try to forget you. I tried hard, Ted, for I thought that I was doing it for you."

Daisy's arm was through Ted's now, and her hand was clasped in his. Her lips were still trembling, but she looked happier.

"I didn't know what to do after you stopped my horse," said Daisy. "I went home, but I couldn't sleep that night, so I went out alone after dark and rode. I rode out on the prairie, where it was quiet and calm and peaceful, and was going back, when I dropped my handkerchief. It was the handkerchief you saved for me the day we first met, Ted, and I wanted to keep it. It had blown into the bushes on the side of the trail, and, as I got down to pick it up, I found a note lying on the ground where some one had dropped it. I didn't know what I was doing, but in the bright moonlight I read it."

"It was to Earl Rossiter from Ashford, and it said that he was planning to set fire to the stamp mill that night. Earl had been riding there, I guess, and dropped it. I forgot all about everything else, and turned my horse and rode all the way to Yellow River to warn you. I was half crazy. I saw Ashford there, and he came to speak to me. I had dismounted and was looking for your cabin. He was coming toward me, and I ran from him. The stamp mill was afire then. I saw it. I ran into the first house I came to. It was the powder house, but I didn't know it."

"I heard Hendricks, or whatever his name was, coming after me in the darkness. I ran upstairs, and he locked me in the room there. He said that I would be safe there until he got away, and I think he rode away on my horse. I fell over a chair or something in the room up there, and must have hit my head, for the next thing I knew I was lying on the floor and the room was full of smoke. There was a glare outside and a terrible noise on the roof above. I ran to the window, and then I saw you, and you saved me."

Daisy would trust herself to speak no further. She leaned on Ted's arm, and his hand, as it held hers, told her that he understood and that it was all right now.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SMOOT AND THE OTHERS.

With the aid of Earl Rossiter, Ashford, or Hendricks, as he should be called, came Detective Smoot and the young mine riders the day. They put a long stretch of guard between them and the stamp mill before they started on their horses to a walk. As Hendricks rode on he turned often and glanced back, while the dripping sweat ran down his brow. His face wore a frightened, hunted look. Rossiter glanced at him and laughed.

"What!" said Ted, "you are amusing—but Ashford

isn't your name any more now. The jig is up. The secret is known. The cat is out of the bag. I might as well call you Hendricks. That was a pretty slick trick you played on the Ted Strong crowd."

Hendricks flashed an ugly glance at his companion.

"That's all right, Rossiter," he said; "go ahead and laugh. It was you that put me up to the whole game. I planned to get away with a little money, and let it go at that, but it was you who put me up to the setting fire to the stamp mill and interfering with the girl. It's that, and not the loss of the money, that has got Ted Strong after me so hot and heavy."

"I paid you for it, didn't I?" said Rossiter sharply. "What are you talking about?"

"You paid me for it," snarled Hendricks, "but you don't take into account that I am in a pretty fix at present. The stealing of the gold was a trifle. I would have got away with that easy enough. They wouldn't have followed me out of the county for that. But this setting fire to the stamp mill—that's arson, and means twenty years in jail. They might lynch me for it."

"Funny," laughed Rossiter. "Did you have a pleasant time in that dugout there in the woods when the people were hunting for you far and wide?"

"Pleasant time!" said Ashford. "I wouldn't go through that again for ten thousand dollars, let alone the measly thousand you gave me. Do you think you can hide me safely at Sunset Ranch, or wherever it is you are going now?"

"I guess so," said Rossiter; "but what a joke it would be if you were caught. They ran across the empty dugout shortly after I got you out of it. They are sure to be right after us. Wouldn't I have the laugh on you if they caught you?"

"The laugh might be on you," said Hendricks, in a rasping voice. "Suppose I was caught. They'd give me a chance to talk, they would. And do you suppose I would stand there and keep my mouth shut like a fool and let you go free when you put me up to the game? Not much. There would be two people get it in the neck if I was caught."

Earl Rossiter threw himself around on the back of his horse and rode close alongside of Hendricks.

"Just cut out that line of talk," he grated. "If I hear another word of that kind from you, I'll leave you to be run down. Just split on me. Try it once, and see if they'll believe you. Do you suppose any one would take your word against mine? Why, I am a gentleman, you skunk!"

"A nice sort of a gentleman," muttered Hendricks.

"Cut that out. Just go easy, or I'll knock you off your horse. I'll take you prisoner myself and turn you over to the sheriff. If I should take you in among those miners at Crook City, who were thrown out of work and lost money through that fire and showed you to them, do you think that they would listen to much talk from you? Do you think that any charges you might make against the man that captured you would count? Not a bit of it. It would be the tallest tree and the longest rope for yours, and they would discuss the merits of the case after you were planted. You can't scare me with your talk. And don't think that you can blackmail me, either. It's no good. The less you have to say the better."

Earl Rossiter had plenty of courage and nerve, and he had Hendricks under his thumb by this time. Hendricks, although older than Rossiter, had been nothing but his tool, and Earl, in his unscrupulous, selfish way, knew how to handle him.

"I was only fooling," muttered Hendricks. "You know, of course, I was only joking."

"Of course," said Rossiter, with a sneering laugh, "I was only fooling myself. We are really the best of friends. But still I can't help laughing at you, you are so scared. You are simply scared out of your wits."

Rossiter laughed loud and long, but Hendricks made no answer this time. He pressed forward on his horse, still looking backward nervously.

"They will follow us here, all right," said Earl. "There isn't much question about that. They were pretty hot on your trail this morning. They must have found that

dugout by this time, and they will track you down in this direction."

"How far is it to that ranch house of yours?"

"A mile or so," said Rossiter, with a smile. "We will see it from the next rise in the prairie."

"I wish we were there," puffed Hendricks; "this hard riding is killing me."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Rossiter, enjoying the distress of his companion. "You were a fine recruit for the young range riders, weren't you? A precious lot of use you would be in herding cattle. Why, I wouldn't give you a job washing dishes on my ranch. Ted Strong had you for a recruit to his band, did he? He'd have found you mighty valuable as a vaquero."

"That's all right," said Hendricks. "I put it all over Strong with that game I played on him. I had him fooled just as bad as I had Ashford fooled. Ashford thought I was his own brother. The only fellow that suspected me was that dark-eyed mug, Kit Summers. He was snooping around all the time with that other little sneak, Bob Martin. I'd like to choke that kid with his Shakespearean quotations. He's about the freshest guy in the gang. The whole push of them was ready to pile into me at any minute, but he was the worst. I don't see how those fellows can make out to run a ranch or a mine or anything else. They may be able to ride horses, but they haven't got horse sense."

If there was any sort of talk in the world that Earl Rossiter liked to hear, it was abuse of his enemies, Ted Strong and his friends. He had been fighting them so long, had been defeated so often by them, that his hatred for them had become the ruling passion of his whole nature, and possessed him like a mania.

"Did you see Cole Carew hanging about there?" he asked. "I hear that he has joined forces with them."

"You mean that long-armed, freckled-faced fellow?" said Hendricks, the words being shaken out of him, as it were, by the steady leaps of his horse. "He is out on the prairie, somewhere, with a gang of cow-punchers, working for the Black Mountain outfit. He had some kind of a row with Ted Strong, but he took a job with him, all the same."

"I guess he had to or starve," said Rossiter. "He hadn't a red cent. There's gratitude for you. I brought that fellow out West here. I paid his fare and promised him work on the ranch. He was starving when I met him—shining shoes or selling papers, or something of the kind, in New York. I helped him when he had no friends."

"You expected to get something out of him if you did," said Hendricks.

"Maybe I did," said Rossiter; "but that doesn't make any difference. He should have some feeling for his friends."

"You have a lot of feeling for me, haven't you?"

"I am helping you to escape."

"Because you are afraid that I'll split on you if I am caught."

"Give me much more of that talk," said Rossiter, "and I'll do what I threatened. I am not bluffing. I get even with every one who bucks up against me. It may take long, but I finally get even. I never rest till I get my revenge. I'll get even with Ted Strong yet, and I am going to make that fellow Carew pay pretty dearly for what he has done. I know something about the past of that fellow, and I can land him in a pretty hole. I am just getting some evidence together. He'll go to jail yet."

"Look behind," said Hendricks hoarsely; "men behind on horseback."

Earl looked and lashed his horse.

"They can't see us yet," said he; "they have the sun in their faces. Sunset Ranch is right ahead. We can see it now. Make a race for it, and take that gully there, where we will be hidden."

Five minutes later the two had reached the ranch house, turned over their horses to a vaquero, and disappeared inside. Five minutes after that Ted Strong, a deputy sheriff, and several other men, among them Kit Summers and Bud Morgan, rode up to the ranch house.

CHAPTER XIX.

SCOURING THE WOODS.

Ted Strong had been in the saddle all that morning. A search had been made far and wide for the man who had set his stamp mill afire. Already the stamp mill was in process of repair, and, thanks to the steady courage of the cowboys in fighting the flames, the damage to the Black Mountain Mining Company's property was far less than had been expected.

Ted, however, was determined on tracking down Hendricks. Detective Smoot did his best to run him down. He had every train that left Crook City watched, so that it was impossible for Hendricks to leave the place in that way.

The miners, who were enraged to the boiling point at the dastardly plot against Ted Strong, had organized searching parties to scour the woods and plains about the town, but for three days no trace had been found of Hendricks. Rossiter was seen in Crook City, but he denied knowing any such person, and, as there was no definite proof against him, his denial went.

At the end of the three days, Ted sent for Bud Morgan, who had been managing things up at the Black Mountain Ranch, while Ted and the other young roughriders were busy at the mines. Ted had a great deal of confidence in Bud's ability as a scout and trail finder. Months before, Bud had followed a trail all the way across the Mohave Desert, and Ted considered him as good a scout as there was to be found in the Northwest.

He was not disappointed in Bud's ability, although Smoot, the detective, laughed at the idea of any one being able to track a man by footprints across the prairie. Bud found footprints leading away from the mine, which he said had been left there on the night of the fire. There had been rain the day before, and no rain since. The footprints had been left there when the ground was wet. The other boys had all gone and come to and from the mine by the regular trail. Those prints ran off through the forest and out on the prairie to the westward. Bud argued that they must have been left by the man who had set fire to the stamp mill.

"Jumpin' sand hills!" said Bud, "thet there is his trail shore. It stands ter reason. Ef ye hold the trail an' foller it, ye'll strike him shore."

Smoot said that it was nonsense, but Deputy Sheriff Wayburn, who had a warrant out for the arrest of Hendricks, and was in a hurry to serve it, took another view of the matter altogether.

"We'll follow Bud Morgan," said Wayburn, who was a short, rather stout man, "and if we don't strike him, it won't be our fault. I know Bud from 'way back, for he useter work on the ranches about here years ago, and I never knew him to go on a wrong steer, nohow—leastways, when he was sober."

"Jumpin' sand hills!" said Bud, "I'm sober now. I've shut down on ther corn juice fer keeps. Ted Strong here has made me a blue-ribbon man."

"I'll vouch for his sobriety, all right," said Ted, "and I am willing to follow his lead when it comes to scouting."

Accordingly, a party, consisting of Ted Strong, Bud Morgan, and three deputy sheriffs, as well as Wayburn, set out after Bud. They were all well mounted, and Bud made tracks across the prairie at such a rate that some of them had doubts as to whether he saw or was following a trail at all.

They changed their opinion, however, when they came to a dugout cabin out in the midst of the long buffalo grass, which showed signs of recent occupation. There were embers of a fire still glowing before the door, and the remains of a meal scattered about on the hard earthen floor of the cabin.

"What did I tell ye?" said Bud. "Here is where he rested. Here is where he tied up his horse. Here is an old handkerchief of his. Jumpin' sand hills! I've seen him a-warin' thet there handkercher myself. It's too swell fer an ornery coyote like me er Ted here. We hes ter be contented with ornery bandannas. But this here is silk, an' I hes noticed it around ther neck of thet there measly coyote."

The handkerchief in question, which Bud raised from the ground, was of a dark-red silk, and both Ted and Kit remembered having seen it in the possession of Hendricks.

This discovery convinced the others that Bud was on the right trail, and when Bud, after an examination of the ground, said that two horses had come there a short time before, and left, going to the westward, the others were quite ready to follow his lead.

"No time to lose fooling around," said Bud. "Jumpin' sand hills! those fellers have an hour's start on us, an' we'll have ter hunch ourselves ter git 'em."

"I can follow them within the county," said Wayburn, "but I cannot pursue them outside of it. My authority won't allow me to do that."

"Then if we can't catch them before they get over the border, you are going to give up the chase?" said Ted.

"Have to," said Wayburn.

Ted swung into his saddle and slapped the side of his horse.

"There is not a minute to lose," he said. "That fellow Hendricks has run away from officers of the law before now. He knows the lay of the land, all right, and you can bet that he is heading straight for the border now. Bud, climb on your cayuse and set the pace. We'll have to land that fellow."

Bud was nothing loath. He laid hand on the pommel of his saddle and vaulted into it without touching stirrup or mane. The deputy sheriffs mounted hurriedly, and the whole cavalcade set off at an easy lope.

Bud had to go slow at first, his shining blue eyes scanning the ground in front of him, and his whole face showing an eagerness and intensity of purpose that reminded the others something of the attitude of a sporting dog that has scented game.

"Good thing it's early yet," said Bud. "There was dew on ther grass when those fellers started, an' when they struck it, it bent down, an' stayed bent after it dried. I kin see their track as plain as day now."

For half a mile Bud kept on a steady lope. Then he raised his hand in the air.

"Strip o' moist ground here! Sort of a bottom. They've left a track in it like they was a couple of elephants. Come on, boys, an' hit it up!"

There was a cheer from the others, and impetuous Kit Summers forged ahead at a gallop. The rest came close behind, riding hard and fast, a steady jingle of stirrup and spur, a steady rhythm of beating hoofs, the sweetest music for a true plainsman's ears, marking their progress.

Through buffalo grass, up rise and down slopes, Bud Morgan never slackened his pace, and the others in solid phalanx behind him came on like a company of charging cavalry.

A mile farther on Bud pulled up and then swung about.

"They headed a little more ter the southward here," he said. "They turned offen to ther south. If we keep our eyes peeled, we may catch sight of them any time. Jumpin' sandhills! ther trail is growin' hotter. We are near them now."

The galloping horsemen swung about and headed in the new direction.

"Sun shining in our eyes now," panted Bud, "makes it hard ter see ahead. But we aire on ther right trail, all right. Trust me fer thet."

"We are headed straight for the Sunset Ranch, where Earl Rossiter lives," muttered Ted.

"I am not in the least surprised at that," said Kit. "We are pretty sure that Rossiter put the fellow up to burning the stamp mill. There isn't much question about that. And I am pretty certain that he is the man who brought the two horses to that dugout this morning, and is helping the fellow to escape at the present moment."

"Stands ter reason he is," said Bud. "Why, if Hendricks were ter be caught, as I trust he will, ther first thing he would do would be ter bring Rossiter inter ther mix-up. An' ye kin bet that little Earl don't fancy thet there idea fer a cent. Besides, I know as how Rossiter is wise ter ther fact of where thet dugout we found is. Do you remember, Ted, how Roaring Bill tackled

us out on ther prairie ther fust day we ever met, an' ye giv' him a little lead in ther shoulder?"

"You bet I remember it," said Ted.

"Well, thet there dugout is ther very place where he went ter get nussed from his wounds. One of his gang, who hes turned decent an' is workin' on er ranch now, tole me about it. He said that Roaring Bill was laid up there with a fever for days, and that Earl Rossiter knew where ther place was, an' went out there ter see him."

"Then it's quite likely that Rossiter thought of the dugout as a likely place to hide his friend and keep him out of the way. He was about the only man around town, outside of Roaring Bill's old gang, who knew anything about it."

"I knew about it," said Bud, "an' ef you fellers hed sent fer me, I would hev took ye to it right away."

"You fellers were up on the ranch," said Ted. "I couldn't tell you about it till you came in to the ranch house. But are you sure you are still on the right trail?"

"Look ahead," said Bud, "and see ef ye kin see anything."

Kit Summers shaded his eyes from the sun and looked forward over the shimmering grass. It was nearly noon then, and the glare was blinding.

"I can see Sunset Ranch dead ahead of us," said Kit. "The last time we were here was when we took part in the Wild West sports and roughriding competition that Rossiter gave."

"I can see something more!" cried Ted. "I can see two men on horseback going around the side of the house. At least, that's what I make it out from here."

"We've got 'em!" yelled Kit. "Come on, boys!"

The horses had been galloping before, but now they were launched forward at a dead run. With a thunder of hoofs like the roar of an avalanche they charged down the long slope that stretched out toward the ranch house. There was a gully crossing the plain, thickly grown with sagebrush. Ted's horse took it without breaking his pace, rising to the jump like a bird. The others went after him at once, and the ride from that point to the door of the Sunset ranch house was more of a cross-country race than anything else.

Had Ted Strong been mounted on Black Bess, he would have won the race. But he was mounted on a sorrel, and, although it was swift, Kit Summers had a speedier horse. He arrived at the door before Ted, and threw himself to the ground. Earl Rossiter, cool and unruffled, arose from a seat on the porch and stepped to meet him.

"Well," said he, "what can I do for you?"

"We come for the fellow that just went in here!" said Kit.

"What fellow?" asked Rossiter coolly.

"Hendricks," said Kit.

At that moment Ted Strong and the others came clattering up and dropped from their horses.

"Come in, gentlemen," said Earl, bowing politely to them. "Mr. Strong, I am delighted to see you. I don't know to what I am indebted for the pleasure of seeing you all, but I am glad to make you welcome to Sunset Ranch. Give your horses to Pancho and come up and sit down. You seem to have been riding hard."

Pancho, a brown-faced, grinning vaquero, dressed in velvet trimmed with tawdry gold lace, stepped forward to take the horses.

Ted looked into the eyes of his enemy, and knew in his heart that Earl Rossiter was deceiving him and playing a part.

"We have been riding hard, and we have been pursuing some one. We are looking for Hendricks, the fellow who set fire to our stamp mill, and we are convinced that he came in this direction."

"How interesting! Really, you surprise me. He came in this direction, you say?"

"Yes," said Ted Sternly, "and I regret to say that we will be forced to search your house for him."

"He is not here."

"We will have to search, all the same."

"And suppose I object to having my house invaded by a party of armed men?"

"Jumpin' sand hills!" cried Bud Morgan. "Object ef yer want ter. It won't do yer no good."

"We intend to search for him," said Ted; "we are certain that he came here."

"I have been here, sitting on the porch, reading, since breakfast. I assure you I haven't seen him."

Ted turned to Bud Morgan and spoke to him in an undertone.

"Surround the house," he whispered. "Get Wayburn and his men posted all around it. See that no one leaves it. Hendricks may be making his escape by the back way even now."

Bud needed no second command. He waved his hand to Wayburn, and the deputies all drew back with him in a solid bunch. After a moment's consultation they separated and took positions on all sides of the house, sitting their horses with carbines at the port and watching closely every possible avenue of escape.

Earl Rossiter watched this maneuver with raised eyebrows.

"What does this mean?" he said. "Do you suspect me of harboring fugitives from justice in my ranch house?"

"We don't suspect anything," said Ted. "We know that Hendricks came this way—"

"But I tell you that he didn't," interrupted Earl.

"We know that Hendricks came this way," went on Ted, as though he had not heard what Earl had said, "and we will have to search the house."

"Suppose I forbid you to enter."

"Suppose you do. I have a number of men here. We have a warrant for the arrest of this man. We intend to search the house even if you do object."

As Ted spoke, his voice hardened into a metallic ring and his eyes grew cold and steely. His hand dropped naturally on the butt of the six-shooter at his belt, and remained there, with the fingers half coiled around the vulcanite grip.

Earl Rossiter noticed the motion, and his face changed suddenly.

"I was only joking," he said; "really. There is no necessity for to reach for your gun."

"I am glad there's not," said Ted, leaving his hand where it was.

"And, of course, I will allow you to make a search," continued Earl. "I was only joking when I said anything that would indicate to the contrary. Come right in and search where you will. I will be only too glad to show you through the ranch house. You have not visited me here in a long time, and I don't believe that you have seen any of the new furnishings I have had put in. Come right in, gentlemen. Bring in the whole crowd and let them have a drink."

"Kit and myself will come inside," said Ted, "but the others will remain on their horses right where they are."

"All right," said Earl. "Come on in and look any place that you please."

He stepped across the porch and into the big room that opened onto it. Earl Rossiter had not spared money in furnishing his ranch house, and, as he was wealthy, he had made it as luxurious a place as you could find anywhere west of the Mississippi.

Cothly rugs and skins lay on the floors, and there were pictures on the walls that must have cost a great deal. Soft, leather-covered couches, inviting one to rest, were stretched along the walls and built into the window niches on either side of the room, and at one end was a sideboard with a glittering array of bottles and cut glass.

Ted and Kit gazed about them in astonishment. They had never seen or heard of a ranch house fitted up in this style before. The paneling that ran along one of the walls was beautiful in workmanship and design, and must have been ordered in New York and fitted in afterward by Mexican workmen.

"Pretty slick workmanship," said Earl, noticing the direction of Ted's eyes; "but won't you have something to drink?"

"We don't drink," said Ted.

"A glass of brandy or a bottle or so of beer. I have

some fine Bourbon whisky here, and perhaps there is some champagne iced."

"They are all one to me," said Ted. "I would rather have a glass of water than the whole lot of them."

"Funny the way you fellows turn up your noses at the good things of life," said Earl. "As for me, I like a wee nip now and then, and I believe in taking it when you need it. I hate to drink alone, but I think that I will have something now."

He filled a tiny liquor glass from a cut-glass decanter, sniffed the brandy, tossed it off, and smacked his lips.

"Now," he said, "just wait till I light a cigarette, and I will be ready to show you all over the place."

"Wouldn't that fellow sicken you?" whispered Kit to Ted. "Look at the airs he puts on, and look at the assumption of friendliness he makes. He hates us both, and he knows that we know it. He has done you a thousand injuries, and I don't doubt that he wishes us both dead at the present moment. He is a hypocrite if ever there was one."

"Never mind that now," said Ted, in the same tone. "We are in his house, and we have to be civil to him. Besides that, picking a quarrel with him won't help the business that brought us here. We came here to get Hendricks, and that is our first lookout."

Earl had got his cigarette lighted by this time and started to show the boys through the house. He took them from room to room, pushing draperies aside to let them see the walls beneath, making them look under beds and moving furniture on all sides.

Ted and Kit searched every nook and cranny that they could find, going up to the big roomy garret of the ranch house and down to the dark cellar beneath it, but they found not the slightest trace of any one being in hiding there. Then they proceeded to the large barns and outhouses. As they left the ranch house by the door in the rear, they could see the cordon of deputies, sitting their horses like so many statues, still on the watch. Wayburn and Bud had used a good deal of judgment in posting them, taking in the whole rancheria, outhouses, and all within their circle, and leaving no point that was not covered with eye and gun.

TO BE CONTINUED.

NO CHANCE FOR A SWINDLE.

The Subaltern: "Let me introduce my fiancée, old man."

His Friend: "Best congratulations!"

The Subaltern: "I've known her since she was in pinafores."

His Friend (trying to say the right thing): "So you can be sure you are not buying a pig in a poke!"

CLAUDE BALKS ON EXTREMES.

Claude had been promised a motor ride with his father, and his mother had sent him upstairs to get ready. As he came down, his mother said:

"Have you washed your face, Claude?"

"Yes'm," answered the boy.

"And your hands?" queried the mother.

"Yep," said Claude.

"And your neck?" persisted the mother.

"Oh, see here, mother," said the boy, in disgust, "I ain't no angel!"

WITH THE ESSAYIST AT HOME.

"Have you finished that essay on 'Remarks on the Depths of Nature,' Philomon?" asked the pretty wife.

"I have," replied the literary husband.

"And the one on the 'Effect of the European War on the Nations of the Globe'—how about that?"

"That is finished."

"And the other on 'Man's Place in the History of the World,' how's that?"

"Just completed also."

"Then take Phil out for a walk. The poor dog hasn't been outdoors to-day."

THE NEWS OF THE WORLD.

Louisiana "Bad Man" Hanged.

Helaire Carriere, Louisiana "bad man," was hanged recently in the State penitentiary at Baton Rouge for the murder of Sheriff Swords last July. Run down in the canebrakes after a sensational man hunt of weeks, Carriere resisted his execution to the last moment, even to the extent of attempting suicide in his cell the night before execution.

Helaire Carriere, who bore the reputation of "dead shot" and "bad man," was convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of Marion L. Swords, of St. Landry Parish, on July 17, 1916. The sheriff was shot and killed when he and a posse attempted to recapture Carriere, who had escaped from jail at Jennings, where he was held on the charge of killing a negro.

After killing the sheriff, Carriere succeeded in remaining at liberty for a month, although pursued by posses through canebrakes and swamps, and was captured only after he had been severely wounded. He was tried and found guilty of murder the following October. The State Supreme Court affirmed the verdict.

The case attracted widespread attention throughout Louisiana and neighboring States because of the prominence of Sheriff Swords, one of the State's leading Democrats, and because of Carriere's reputation as a "bad man." The latter had served two terms in the penitentiary for stealing and for receiving stolen property. Sheriff Swords had befriended him on several occasions; and when captured, Carriere expressed regret that he had killed him, saying he would not have done so if Swords had not taken negroes to help capture him.

The sheriff, accompanied by a deputy, three citizens, and three negro guides, surrounded Carriere in a cabin just at dawn, after residents of the Mallet Woods had informed him that the fugitive was terrorizing the neighborhood. Carriere fled into a cornfield, carrying a rifle, and was closely pursued by the sheriff and his deputy. In a running fight the deputy and two guides were wounded and the sheriff was shot through the heart. Carriere escaped unwounded.

A month later Carriere was brought to bay in an abandoned sawmill near Basile, Louisiana, and was captured with more than twenty buckshot wounds in his body.

High Prices Benefit Hop Farmers.

This has been a great year for the hop growers of central New York. Nearly all the growers have sold at from seventy-five cents to ninety cents a pound, and one grower, John Zwiefel, of Waterville, sold his crop for one dollar a pound, his product being the finest sample produced in the State, dealers say. George W. Allen, of Sangerfield, harvested between forty and fifty thousand pounds; John J. Bennett, of Waterville, past eighty, the oldest active grower in the State, had nearly as large a crop; Charles T. Hatch, of Waterville, grew about forty thousand pounds, and many other growers did nearly as well.

A forty-thousand-pound crop which was sold at eighty cents a pound meant thirty-two thousand dollars to the grower. As it costs from twenty to twenty-five cents a pound to grow hops, that would leave a net profit of about twenty-four thousand dollars for the grower. And several growers in and around Waterville have made that out of hops this year, it is said.

Some of the growers in Madison County, especially around Morrisville, plowed up their hops last spring, as they were afraid that nation-wide prohibition was coming this year and that the making of beer would be stopped. If that happened, hops would have no market, as they are used for flavoring beer. Now the Madison County growers are sorry they quit the business.

It is estimated that New York State this year produced about eight thousand bales of two hundred pounds each, or one million six hundred thousand pounds. Estimating that these hops bring seventy-five cents a pound, which is a very conservative estimate, the Empire State hop producers will have about one million three hundred thousand dollars for their crops this year, eight hundred and eighty thousand dollars of which should be clear profit.

The consumption of hops in the United States, it is estimated, will be about two hundred and thirty thousand bales. In 1883 New York State alone produced much more than that figure, or two hundred and eighty-five thousand bales. That and the fifteen years that followed were the big hop years in this State. Then the industry began to decline for various reasons, chiefly because of low prices for the crop and because the commodity was being produced in such great quantities in Oregon, California, and Washington.

The reason hops are so high this year is because the hops stored from previous years are nearly all used up, and, as there can be no importations from Europe, brewers of beer—the principal users of hops—have to depend for their supplies on this year's crops and on the United States product.

Great quantities formerly were imported from Poland, Germany, Austria, and England, but the war has put a stop to that business and American growers have reaped the benefits.

In 1882, because of a speculator's undue inflation of prices, hops went to one dollar and one dollar and ten cents a pound. Nearly every one in the hop country went wild when they saw hops slowly increasing in price, while the prediction was freely made that they would reach two dollars a pound. All who had money and could buy a few bales up to a few hundred bought at prices from fifty cents to one dollar a pound and held for the increase. Suddenly the bottom fell out of the market and prices fell to five to ten cents a pound. Two-thirds of the dealers and producers were ruined in the crash and hundreds who never raised or before bought a pound of hops suffered heavily because they jumped into the whirlpool of speculation.

and suffered accordingly. This year the price is said to have been based entirely on the law of supply and demand.

Electric Power for Irrigation.

It is probable that by the time irrigating season rolls around again electric power will be pulling the big pumps for the irrigated farms on the Colorado River west of Ballinger, Texas. Such a proposition is already under way.

Charles Ferguson, who is a booster when it comes to developing the country along modern lines, has proposed to contribute the labor necessary to place the material on the ground if the power plant will furnish the material and construct the high power transmission line to distribute the current.

Manager Treadwell, of the local power plant, says that his company has this extension under consideration. If a sufficient number of farmers can be interested in the proposition to assure the power company that the investment will not work a loss to them, the line will be extended from Ballinger. When the high price of oil is taken into consideration, and the upkeep on gas engines and repairs, the power proposition has much the best of the deal. Pumping water by electricity is the most satisfactory, and where current is distributed at a reasonable rate will bring a saving to the farmer who irrigates his land.

The proposition to connect the city pump up to the electric line and replace steam with electricity for pumping water for the city is still pending. The delay is due to the fact that the necessary equipment for making the change cannot be had at this time on account of the shortage of material and the great demand made on the electrical manufacturer by the government.

Oil-Laden Steamer Battles with Fire.

A large British steamer, loaded with admiralty stores, principally munitions and six thousand barrels of oil in bulk, was towed back into an Atlantic port recently with fire in her engine-room compartments under control after a twenty-four-hour battle to keep the ship from exploding.

The fire broke out when the ship was thirty miles out of port. Blue flames were seen coming from the engine-room compartments. In these was stored the oil in every available reserve water tank.

Captain ——— ordered the lifeboats swung out, and wireless calls for help brought several government responses and two tugs. The crew, in a temporary panic, rushed into the boats, but were ordered back by the naval gunners, who were called into service.

Captain ——— told them to be real Britons and called on his firemen to go below and draw the fires. They made their way through the gases which were pouring off the burning oil, and, with the aid of the ship's pumps, which flooded the engine room, the ship's fires were soon out. Meantime, the pilot had put the ship into a creek where the winds were not so dangerous.

Fire continued burning in several of the tanks, but it was said to be well under control and away from other combustibles. The cargo is valued at over two

million dollars, and only the quick action of the pumps is thought to have prevented an explosion. The ship is practically new.

An investigation has been started by the admiralty and United States officials to ascertain the cause.

Dynamite Found in Public Building.

The discovery of three pounds of dynamite lying in an areaway of the south plaza of the city hall in Philadelphia threw a scare into city-hall employees. Police officials believe it was stolen by some workman, who later abandoned it.

The dynamite was discovered by Nathaniel Rambo, foreman of the city-hall cleaners. The nine sticks of the explosive were lying in an areaway, almost directly below the offices of City Controller Walton. He carried the stuff to the office of Superintendent of Maintenance Berry, and an investigation was started.

Then the city-hall employees, who have become quite accustomed to the mention of revolvers, black-jacks, and other appliances in connection with city affairs, heard about the dynamite.

Overworked as the majority of the officeholders are, the average city-hall employee paused from his labors long enough to advance some theory to explain the presence of the dynamite.

Examination of the dynamite showed that the stuff was sixty per cent pure, but in poor condition. No fuse was attached, and even had there been a fuse it is doubtful if the dynamite could have been persuaded to explode.

Lady Appointed Tax Assessor.

As soon as she qualifies, Mrs. Willie Stevens will be tax assessor for Runnels County, Texas. This was made possible when the commissioners' court by a unanimous vote appointed Mrs. Stevens to succeed her husband in this office.

Mr. Stevens was called to his country's colors, after serving only one year as tax assessor, having been elected at the last election. It was pretty well known that Mrs. Stevens would succeed her husband, and no other application was made for the place and no opposition expressed to her appointment.

Mr. Stevens went to Camp Travis to train for service in France. He was among the men drafted from his county. He no doubt feels that the people at home appreciate the service he is rendering to his country and are here to see that loved ones left behind do not suffer.

In case the war is prolonged and Mr. Stevens is kept in the army, Mrs. Stevens will serve out the unexpired term, and of course it will then be up to the people to reelect her if she offers for the place, or elect some one else. In case Mr. Stevens returns home, it will be an easy matter for the court to accept Mrs. Stevens' resignation and reappoint Mr. Stevens.

Damage by Horse-radish Flea Beetle.

An insect that now menaces the growing of horse-radish—a four-hundred-thousand-dollar crop in the United States—is also threatening other more important members of the cabbage and mustard family.

This insect, introduced from Europe, has been named the horse-radish flea beetle.

It is oval in outline, about one-eighth of an inch long, and has very light-yellow or cream-colored wing covers bordered with black. A black band running the length of the back of the adults also enables this beetle to be distinguished from other species in this country. The larvæ mine the petioles or midribs of leaves, while the adults, which hop, feed on the leaves, causing characteristic flea-beetle injury—withering and dying—or gouge deep pits in the midribs.

No systematic control program has been adopted as yet. Bordeaux mixture, a powerful repellent against flea beetles, applied on the first appearance of the insect will prevent much injury, and if arsenate of lead is used later it should hold the insect in check.

Every Snake Has Its Day.

The bench show of the American Snake Fanciers' Association, slated for Rochester, New York, next January, has been canceled because Peter Gruber, "snake king," says it's unpatriotic to take them away from their tasks of killing off food-destroying rodents.

"At army cantonments it has been found that snakes are better than cats for ridding the place of rats, and a busy snake in a granary is worth a dozen rat traps. It would be treason to deprive the country of this great source of food conservation, and I am glad the American Forestry Association has called attention to the value of snakes."

Conserving Farm Labor.

One of the most serious problems arising under the selective-draft act in the upbuilding of the National Army, as stated in Washington, is the exemption of farm labor. The provost general of the army is now working out a solution of it, and officers in his bureau are drawing up a set of regulations, soon to be promulgated, expected to embrace all details of a practical solution.

It is not believed that recourse to Congress will be necessary for an amendment to the law. As the plans unfold they appear to need only executive approval to be effective in all respects.

President Wilson's attention was called to the situation presented by the necessity of farm-labor exemption late in September, when the officers of the Federal Board of Farm Organizations called and laid the case before him. The president immediately took it up with General Crowder and prompt action followed.

The essential essence of argument in favor of the selective-draft law used most frequently in its support and believed to be largely responsible for its passage was that it would put the right man in the right place to aid in winning the war. It gave the military authorities, acting under the commander in chief—the president—absolute control over the disposition of the seven million drafted men. It was early apparent to the administration that the farmers of the country would be one of the main foundations of the entire structure of a campaign of aggression, as well as home defense, in the way of supporting this nation.

Immediately, also, it developed that with the en-

forcement of the draft without discrimination there would follow an unprecedented shortage of farm labor. The danger arose that the farmers might fall short of their part of the general task of winning the war through mere lack of men to handle the crops.

America bid fair to make at the outset the mistake which England fell into and later had to remedy after much harm was done. The selective draft was draining men from the farm, taking them from places which could not in many cases be filled. In a sense, farming is the highest class of skilled labor and the supply is limited.

It was found that many young men on the farms declined to take advantage of exemptions which they might claim. Patriotic pride deterred them from claiming exemption. The president was shown a letter from one father who told with pride how all his ancestors had fought in all the wars from the Revolution to the Spanish War, and the farmer's two sons were not willing that it should be said of them that they were the first to fall out of line. They went into the army and let the farm go.

Then the Federal Board of Farm Organizations took up the situation. This board represents more than two million farmers and is in a measure to the agriculturists what the chambers of commerce are to business and the American Federation of Labor is to general industry. This board expressly disclaimed suggesting the exemption as a class exemption—that is, in so far as the farmers may be considered a class distinct from doctors or lawyers, but because they are skilled laborers needed in their particular line of industry. It was pointed out that, aside from the draft, deep inroads have been made upon available farm labor by other causes. The high wages offered by transportation companies, contractors, industrial plants, and munition works have attracted the young men from the farms in great numbers.

In one State alone—New York—according to the school census of last June, there were sixteen thousand fewer farm hands on the lands than the year before. The farm labor of the United States as a whole was reported by the bureau of crop estimates to be fifteen per cent below normal March 1st last.

Getting Men Out of Prison is His Hobby.

A young man stood before the bar of a Kansas court, convicted of robbery. In a moment of temptation he had yielded and taken something that did not belong to him. Before that his reputation had been good. He had a wife and two children, worked hard, and was respected, but he had taken a few drinks and had stumbled from the paths of honesty. He had pleaded guilty, told his story, and thrown himself upon the mercy of the court.

The judge was speaking now.

"Under the law I have no choice but to send you to prison," he said. "Your sentence will be an indeterminate one of from one to fourteen years. According to the law of this State, if at the end of your minimum sentence your conduct has been such as to merit consideration, you will be released under parole. So, you see, the length of your confinement depends to a greater or less extent upon yourself. If you observe

the rules of the prison, you will have earned a parole at the expiration of one year of your term."

Then the guards led the prisoner away.

From the rear of the room John T. Glynn, now chief of police of Leavenworth, Kansas, and long a personal friend of the man just sentenced, had witnessed the proceedings. To him it was no new scene, but his profession had not made him hard-hearted, and in this case he believed that the law had punished unjustly. Seeking out the prisoner, he added his admonitions to those of the judge.

"Do as he told you and I will help you to get out," said Glynn.

"I'll do it," said the prisoner. And he kept his word.

The year was up. Not a black mark stood against the prisoner. His conduct had been exemplary and the warden readily indorsed his application for a parole.

True to his word, Glynn was on hand when the board met. On behalf of the prisoner he stated the case, presented the warden's recommendation, and himself promised to be responsible for the good conduct of the prisoner. In fact, his former employer had promised him his job back.

The application was refused. The board explained it had been paroling so many convicts that political capital was being made of it, and it had been decided to curtail the number of releases. If the prisoner continued his good record, he might hope for a parole at the end of his second year in prison.

But the prisoner did not make good. Discouraged, not understanding, longing for a chance to redeem himself, he went from bad to worse; his work suffered, he was disciplined and punished, and rapidly developed into one of the bad men of the prison. He served more than half of his term before he was released.

While it worked hardship in his case, however, it proved a blessing to at least one thousand other persons. For when he heard the decision of the board, Glynn vowed that he would devote himself thereafter to seeking means of improving conditions which would permit such things. More, he would try to keep men from going to prison in the first place, and for those already in he would try to find a way out.

Promise of work is a requirement of all parole boards. Glynn says he has found it easy to get jobs for ex-convicts. The cry that no one will give a man just released from prison another chance to make good he derides. One contractor has given at least a hundred jobs to men who have served time, and one of his most trusted foremen once was an accomplished thief.

That is why from one end of the country to the other Glynn the detective is overshadowed by Glynn the friend of the man who slips and goes wrong, the man who will go to the front for him, and the holder of a record for getting first offenders against the law paroled.

East and west, north and south, the courts, the governors, the prison wardens know him equally well. Parole boards have listened to his pleas in behalf of men in whom he believes the good still is greater than the bad.

In States where the law permits the trial judge to

grant paroles, Glynn has made many pleas for first offenders. In States where such a law does not exist he has not only worked to gain the release of men and boys and women who already have served part of their terms, but he has sought to interest legislators in the enactment of the parole law which will permit freedom for offenders before they have had the stain of prison indelibly imprinted upon them.

Glynn is modest about this part of his life. He talks of it only when urged, then he is quite likely to branch off into a dissertation upon his hobby of a general parole law.

"I have never sought a parole for any person until I have investigated the case, either personally or through reliable sources," he said the other day. "Scores of people all over the country have helped me. You would be surprised if you knew how easy it is to find some one willing to extend a hand in such cases. In most of the cases some person other than myself has been ready to stand sponsor for the paroled prisoner. Where a man or woman is friendless I have undertaken that responsibility."

"There is another thing I believe should be done to abolish crime. That is to do away with drink. Poverty, lack of education and chances to acquire it, unpleasant surroundings, unsanitary neighborhoods, all have their part in the making of criminals, but above all others stands out the demon of drink.

"Drunken parents lead to drunken children, and a drunken man is capable of doing anything. When we have abolished drink we shall have done the one big thing to check crime."

Subway "Guardess" Now in Brooklyn.

The subway guardess is a reality in Brooklyn. She is Miss Catherine Moloney, and her trial run from Thirty-ninth Street (Bay Ridge) station to the Sixty-third Street station and back was declared by the subway authorities "thoroughly satisfactory."

Miss Moloney, the pioneer of girl subway guards, who will be much in evidence before many days have passed, owing to war demands on men employees, will be in charge of one of the new cars, the three doors of which are opened and closed by pressing a button. Other girl guards were on the same train yesterday, "learning the ropes" under Miss Moloney's instruction.

Many girl guards will be in the service. For a time they will be employed only during the rush hours, when the greatest number of trains is operated. Later they will work steadily and will receive the same wages as men guards.

Peanut An Important Food.

With the unusual amount of attention that is now being given to the conservation of food supplies and the increase in production of various kinds of farm crops, the work which the University of Texas, through its department of extension, is doing in the matter of calling public attention to the best methods of utilizing peanut products as a food is of importance. The peanut has recently sprung into prominence as one of the standard crops of this State. It is estimated that there were about three hundred thousand acres devoted to this product in Texas this year. Al-

though the drought seriously affected the yield in some portions of the State, the crop as a whole was very satisfactory.

The fact that many of the cottonseed-oil mills have installed peanut-crushing equipment and have encouraged the development of this industry in their respective localities has been of great aid in bringing about an increase of the acreage. While it is too early to make any reliable forecast as to what the peanut acreage of Texas will be next year, it is safe to say that the area devoted to this crop will be probably several times what it was in 1917.

In a bulletin written by Miss Jessie P. Rich, formerly of the department of extension, division and home welfare, and which has been issued by the department of extension, much valuable information is given as to the uses of the peanut on the home table. This treatise contains a large number of recipes which indicate some of the ways in which peanuts may be used as a food in the home. In a preliminary statement Miss Rich says:

"The peanut deserves to hold the same high rank among the foodstuffs used by man as do beans and other peas. Peanuts, like peas and beans, are a concentrated food. They contain more fat and less starch than the other legumes, but have about the same amount of protein, or muscle-building food.

"The legumes have a high nutritive value and contain a large per cent of protein, or muscle-building substance. Few of our vegetable foodstuffs contain more than ten or fifteen per cent protein, while the legumes have from twenty to thirty per cent in their many varieties. The protein, or muscle-building food, is a daily necessity in our diet, and in the form of meat or eggs or cheese is one of the most expensive food substances. The use of the peanut, which is so rich in protein, is therefore strongly to be recommended to those to whom economy is important. It is essentially, when raised at home, a comparatively cheap source of protein."

Miss Rich says that ten cents' worth of peanuts has a caloric value equal to sixty-two cents' worth of steak, thirty-four cents' worth of milk, twenty cents' worth of cheese, eighteen cents' worth of potatoes, or nine cents' worth of beans. Continuing, she says:

"Peanuts are thought by many to be indigestible. They have gained this reputation because usually they have been improperly prepared and eaten in large quantities after a hearty meal or between meals or late at night. They are, as a rule, poorly masticated. The peanut, therefore, has caused digestive troubles and fallen into disrepute because of its abuse rather than its use.

"The peanut, in order to be properly digested, should be regarded as a rich leguminous food, should be properly prepared, and used only in its proper place as any other member of the legume family is used. In the use and preparation of the peanut the following things should be kept in mind: (1) Peanuts are high in protein and consequently take the place of meat in the dietary. (2) Peanuts are high in fats and can be used in place of other fats. For example, peanut sandwiches may be prepared without the addition of butter, and peanut bread does not need shortening as the peanut furnishes a sufficient quantity of

fat in both instances. (3) Peanuts contain raw starch and therefore must be cooked before they are digestible. They can be parched as roasted peanuts, or they may be prepared as are the peas and beans. The same pleasant flavor does not develop, however, when they are cooked in the latter way. (4) Peanuts are a highly concentrated food and should be thoroughly broken up before reaching the stomach. This may be accomplished by thorough mastication or by chopping or grinding. When a food substance reaches the stomach in a state of fine division, it is more quickly digested and more thoroughly utilized."

It is pointed out that the peanut should be made to serve and highly valued as a food in this State, because it may be easily produced and at low cost. No special care is required to keep peanuts in storage for a long time.

As is well known, the principal purpose to which they are now being put by the cottonseed-oil mills is the manufacture of oil with a residue of meal and cake, the latter being used as a stock feed. More and more attention, however, is being paid by peanut factories in Texas to the manufacture of peanut butter and peanut-meal flour, all of which, as well as peanut oil, are important additions to the available food supply of the State. The recipes which Miss Rich has offered to the public through the department of extension include those for making peanut butter, peanut bread, peanut biscuit, peanut buns, peanut milk toast, peanut white sauce, peanut sandwiches, peanut soup, baked peanuts, peanut turnips, peanuts and rice, potatoes and peanuts, peanut loaf, peanut macaroni, tomatoes stuffed with peanuts, peanut chops, bananas and peanut salad, lettuce with peanut dressing, peanut cake, peanut cookies, peanut candy, and salted peanuts.

Lottery Raided in Home.

After having arrested James Hilton, alleged head of a lottery based on the daily statement of the St. Louis Clearing House, and his wife, Mrs. Mattie Hilton, and searched their home on Shaw Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, and seized records and papers, eleven detectives, under direction of Detective Sergeant Stinger, of the gambling squad, served grand-jury subpoenas on about thirty agents and patrons of the lottery.

The subpoenas were made returnable forthwith, and those on whom they were served were taken immediately to the grand-jury room in the Municipal Courts Building. Included among those taken before the jury was Miss Julia Alfred, timekeeper for the Hamilton-Brown Shoe Company, at its factory at Jefferson Avenue and Randolph Street.

Hilton and his wife were taken to police headquarters.

The lottery is known as the Mutual Club Association and also as the Liggett & Myers "jack pot." Hilton is employed by the Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company at its Tower Grove factory. Most of the witnesses rounded up in the case are also employed there.

Hilton admitted having been interested in the lottery, but said he withdrew from it two weeks ago. His wife admitted having cashed checks for her husband at the Night and Day Bank and distributed the money among the winners.

According to records seized by the police at the

Hilton home, there are five thousand tickets out in the lottery. It runs for a period of twenty-seven weeks, and each person who takes a ticket agrees to pay one dollar a week for the full period. Agents are allowed a commission of thirty per cent for placing the tickets and making the collections.

The daily prizes range from ten dollars to one hundred dollars, and each Saturday, with the exception of the last Saturday of the period, there is a capital prize of one thousand dollars. On the last Saturday the capital prize is four thousand dollars. If collections are made on all of the five thousand for the full period, the promoters take in one hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars. Police estimated that after paying the prizes and the commission to agents the promoters make a clear profit of about seventeen thousand dollars for each twenty-seven-week period.

Circuit Attorney McDaniel and his first assistant, William Baer, questioned the witnesses when they were taken before the jury. In addition to the Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company, they include employees of the Hamilton-Brown Shoe Company, the Scullin Steel Company, the United Railways Company, the McIlroy-Sloan and other shoe companies.

A night session of the grand jury was held in order that all the witnesses might be heard.

A subpoena duces tecum was served on officials of the Night and Day Bank, and they were required to produce a record of Hilton's banking transactions. Hilton is alleged to have carried his account there in the name of the Mutual Club Association and signed all checks as its president.

Big Fire Threatened Entire City.

Santa Anna, Texas suffered a heavy fire loss one morning recently, and for a time the entire business section was threatened. At nine-thirty fire broke out in the rear of one of the buildings occupied by Adams & Childress and soon spread to three other buildings.

Adams & Childress carried a general-merchandise stock, conducting a large business and occupying four buildings. It is not known what the loss amounts to, but the firm was incorporated for fifty thousand dollars and the loss is in excess of this amount. It is not known how the fire originated, the flames having spread over the rear of one of the stores before it was discovered, and soon spread over other stores.

The fire company from Coleman responded to a call for help and assisted the local fire company in getting the fire under control. A call had been sent to Brownwood for help from that city, but was later canceled.

Building Model Mining Town.

Like towns built in the West during the wild gold-fever rush of the days of '49, a model mining town has literally grown up overnight in the center of the virgin field in Harlan and Letcher Counties, Kentucky.

Sixteen hundred houses will be completed within fifteen months, say officials of the United States Coal & Coke Company, subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation, which is behind the project.

At present one hundred and sixty eight-room houses are under construction. After these are completed

the building of the others will begin. Forty-eight million feet of lumber altogether will be used.

A temporary commissary building two hundred and forty feet long by sixty feet wide is also now being erected. The permanent commissary will be constructed after the construction of the sixteen hundred houses is completed. It will be of brick and will cost between one hundred and one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars.

An Odd Bequest.

"I give and bequeath my body, as soon as I shall be dead, to my friend, Halley Phillips Gilchrist, of Arlington, Bennington County, Vermont, to be disposed of as she may see fit."

This unusual clause was contained in the will of Cortlandt E. Palmer, a mining engineer, filed for probate recently. Palmer lived on West Ninth Street New York City. His widow, Katherine, who has a musical studio on East Nineteenth Street, denounced the will and said she had instructed her attorney to contest it.

Palmer died September 21, 1917, at Arlington, Vermont, leaving realty of more than sixty thousand dollars and personalty of more than sixty thousand dollars. His widow gets one hundred and fifty dollars a month and forty per cent of the residuary estate after the payment of all expenses, and a life interest in all realty. She is given all household furniture except such articles as are to be selected by Miss Gilchrist.

To the latter is left one hundred dollars a month for twelve months and forty per cent of the residuary. The remaining twenty per cent of the residuary goes in trust to Kingsland Lee Herdenbrook, a cousin, of Providence, Rhode Island. He also is to receive fifty dollars a month.

On their deaths the shares left to the widow and Miss Gilchrist are to be divided between Herdenbrook and Mrs. William C. Palmer, an aunt of the decedent, of Baltimore.

Brave Rescuer's Record.

When Joseph M. Monks, a checker for the United Fruit Company, plunged one day recently into the East River from Pier No. 15, at Fulton Street, and pulled out Howard Williams, sixteen, of Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn, who had fallen from the string-piece, he added another to a string of rescues for which he has received medals.

Monks began life-saving in 1898, when he and his brother John rescued several persons from a fire at No. 70 Henry Street. He was only a boy, yet he directed and aided grown folk in their efforts to escape, and dropped several children from a roof to a lower roof, where his elder brother caught them.

On April 14, 1911, Monks got a Congressional medal for saving a little girl from drowning off Pier A, in the North River. Later in the same year he saved five-year-old John Hreaha, of No. 349 Furman Street, Brooklyn, for which another medal was awarded him. He rescued other persons in 1912 and in 1914. He has medals from the State of New York, the Life-Saving Benevolent Association, and the Volunteer Life-Saving Corps.

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